the weekly Standard

DECEMBER 29, 2003 / JANUARY 5, 2004 • $3.95

TOCQUEVILLE ON COLLEGE FOOTBALL!
JEFFREY H. ANDERSON

When Lincoln Returned to Richmond

Dispatches from an unlikely culture war

by Andrew Ferguson

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UNITED STATES TELECOM ASSOCIATION

presents

Secret CEO Dinner

featuring SBC, VERIZON *and* BELL SOUTH

ST. REGIS HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C.
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2003

PRIX FIXE MENU

SOUP

A rich bouillabaisse of campaign contributions blended with special interest lobbying, cooked under pressure.

SALAD

Wilted competitors tossed with shredded service and sliced investments, topped with an innovation-free dressing.

VEGETABLE

Steamed small businesses and minced oversight, with sauteed consumer protections, colluded carrots and mushrooming phone bills.

ENTREE

Skewered portions of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, served blackened with competition reduction sauce and rack of roasted consumers with glazed regulators.

DESSERT

Generous portions of cash served cold.

A gratuity of $500,000 per year for three years will be expected to pay for this $40,000,000 lobbying campaign.

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The CEOs of the "Bell Cartel" recently held a secret dinner meeting to plot the death of local phone competition.

And you weren't invited.

On the evening of October 20, 2003, the CEOs of the "Bell Cartel" gathered at the ritzy St. Regis Hotel in Washington, D.C. Despite making billions in annual profits, their appetite for control was not quelled.

Most likely over expensive cabernets and through several courses, they plotted the untimely end of consumer choice for telephone service.[1] You can almost close your eyes and smell the cigar smoke.

According to a leaked memo from the United States Telecom Association, the "Bell Cartel" is pressuring their equipment vendors to pay for a $40 million lobbying campaign[2] to kill local phone competition. USTA President Walter McCormick said the effort "is bigger than anything the industry has ever done before."[3]

And the threat to American families and small businesses is greater than ever.

Here's something you are invited to.
Go to *www.comptel.org* to read the USTA memo for yourself.
But be careful. It may leave a bad taste in your mouth.

CompTel ASCENT
ALLIANCE

1 "USTA Poked the hornet's nest this week," Telephony Online, 10/31/2003. 2 "Rivals Seek Probe of Baby Bells' Meeting," LA Times, 10/31/2003.
3 "Baby Bells Plan $40M K St. Blitz," Roll Call, 10/28/2003.

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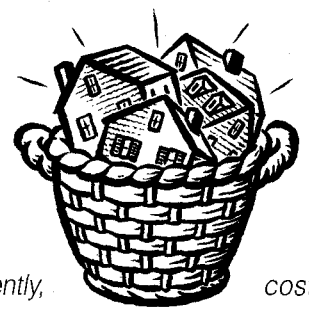
Creating a nation of homeowners.

The supply side.



If you were among the 18 million who financed or refinanced a home recently, a couple of things may have escaped your notice. First, even at historically low rates, plenty of mortgage money was available. No one ever said, "Sorry, we're all out of mortgages." Second, despite the unprecedented volume, most applications were processed quickly. Both are due to the pioneering work of Freddie Mac. The low-cost mortgage funds we attracted from around the world more than met the demand. And the technology we provide lenders helped them make quick work of the paperwork. By constantly improving the home financing system, we make the system work. You can find more information at FreddieMac.com/supplyside.

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THIS IS A COMBINED ISSUE. THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE WEEKLY STANDARD WILL APPEAR IN TWO WEEKS.

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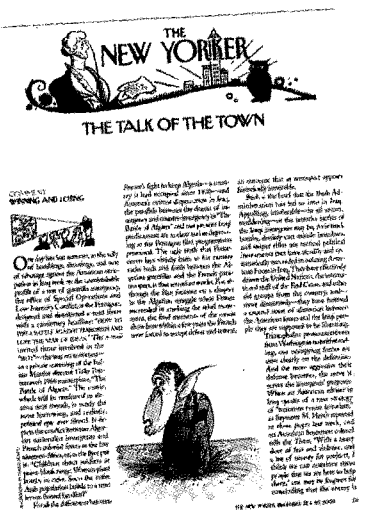
A Quagmire for Bush-bashers?

He's probably not losing any sleep over it, but George W. Bush has lost the Condé Nast primary (i.e., *Vanity Fair*, the *New Yorker*, *GQ*, et al.). Along with Richard Gephardt, the glitziest magazines in the country have come to declare the president a "miserable failure." All of the glossies are openly hostile. And so, in between the stories about sex and shopping, about crime and scandal, about air-headed film stars (and of course, the ads for things costing obscene sums of money), come all of the hits, not only from regular writers on politics, but from artists, cartoonists, film and food critics, all getting in on the fun.

Now and then, however, one of these solons gets a little bit over his pay grade, as occurred in the current *New Yorker*, which led off its "Talk of the Town" column (a fairly dependable Bush-bashing venue) with yet another quagmire story last week. A cartoon showed a depressed and simian Bush figure up to his gonads in quicksand, and the story around it upped the Vietnam War ante with a still more dispiriting analogy: Algiers.

In all of these cases, ran the argument, the terrorists won, and then civil



war followed. This idiot Bush lied us into a hell-hole, and then screwed up further. He drove off our gallant and too-prescient allies, and Iraq hates us. "In the absence of an Iraqi leader, President Bush holds power. Of course, Iraqis won't get to vote for him when they do eventually go to the polls, and for that, at least he can be grateful," writes Philip Gourevitch.

Oops. By the time the issue (a double one, no less) hit the newsstands and door sills, Saddam Hussein had been rousted out of his rathole, James Baker had managed to soften up Europe, coalition forces were rolling up the heroic "resistance" with the help of documents found in Saddam's "spider hole," happy Iraqis had screamed themselves hoarse, and the only civil wars being fought were among the demoralized Democrats.

Wasn't it another *New Yorker* writer—Pauline Kael—who said after the 1972 49-state Republican blowout that it was baffling to her how this could have happened, as everyone she knew had supported McGovern? Look for lots of baffled Condé Nasties next year. ♦

Roughing It in Iraq

Virginia congressman Frank Wolf and his colleague Christopher Shays of Connecticut recently returned from a three-day-two-night trip to Iraq that was not your typical jet-in, jet-out congressional junket. We "rode in old, beat-up vehicles," Wolf told us, to visit schools, meet with community leaders, and even attend an Iraqi wedding in an alley in Kut. They did not identify themselves as congressmen during most of the trip, because "you can find out more if you don't pull up in a Humvee with flak jackets on."

At the wedding, Shays and Wolf even partook of the local cuisine. Or at least Shays did. When Wolf pointed out that Shays "ate everything on his plate," the Connecticut congressman credited his stomach of steel to the Peace Corps (he

Wedding in Kut

served in Fiji). Still, he noted with a smile, "this stuff was not my cup of tea, it was some kind of milk," he said, "but lord knows what."

Wolf reports distinct progress since a May trip to Iraq, including rebuilt schools, playing fields, and infrastructure. Wolf and Shays are the only congressmen to have spent the night in-country since the war, which Wolf says was important "to get a feel for the whole cycle of the day. After all," he says, "your house is different in the morning than in the evening."

Wolf recommends the creation of an independent panel of experts to advise the president on Iraq in "frank, off-the record discussion" and periodic audits of the situation there by a "team from outside the administration," which Wolf

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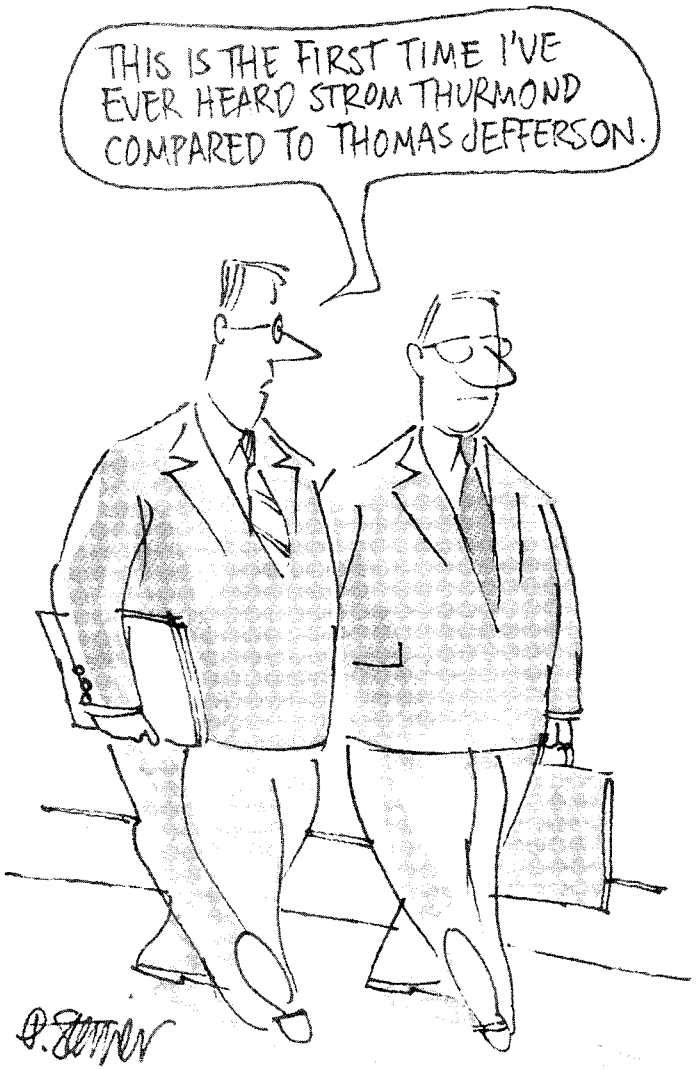

likens to Richard Pipes's "Team B" of outside experts called in during the Ford administration to give the CIA a competing opinion on the strategic threat posed by the Soviet Union. "If I had a serious health problem and I was not getting better as fast as I wanted to, I'd get a second opinion," he says. "It's no insult to the doctor."

Wolf fears "we are losing the battle of ideas and perceptions regarding our intentions and actions abroad." But he frames his objections as constructive criticism. In a written report, at the press conference, and again in conversation, Wolf reads Matthew 23:12 "because he wants to get this right": "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." ♦

Why Is There Still a War on Drugs?

This is the question our libertarian-leaning friends were asking over at *National Review Online* last Friday, December 19. And they weren't asking it because they think the war has been won. They assume it has been badly lost.

That same day, however, the president's Office of National Drug Control Policy released an astonishingly good piece of news: The latest federal survey shows "an 11 percent decline in drug use by 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students over the past two years. The finding translates into 400,000 fewer teen drug users over two years." Says Bush drug czar John P. Walters: This means "teen drug use has [declined to] a level that we haven't seen in nearly a decade."

And what was a big factor in changing teen attitudes toward drug use? The controversial anti-drug advertising campaign run by the drug czar's office, one of whose themes—the link between terrorism and revenues from trafficking—was also highlighted on December 19. The Navy announced that day that it had intercepted a boatload of hashish in the Persian Gulf. Three of the men on board were believed to have al Qaeda ties. Bruce Hoffman, a RAND terrorism expert, was quoted by the AP as calling this "the first empirical evidence I've seen that conclusively links al Qaeda with the drug trade."

Between the teens and the war on terror, that adds up to 400,001 good reasons why there's still a war on drugs. ♦

Zeyad on Saddam

The Iraqi blogger whose photos adorned this page last week was thrown into a depression by the pictures of the captured Saddam. His explanation is worth pondering:

"The images were shocking. I couldn't make myself believe this was the same Saddam that slaughtered hundreds of thousands and plundered my country's wealth for decades. The humiliation I experienced was not out of nationalistic pride or Islamic notions of superiority or anything like that. . . . It was out of a feeling of impotence and helplessness. This was just one old disturbed man yet the whole country couldn't dispose of him. We needed a superpower from the other side of the ocean to come here and 'get him' for us." ♦

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Casual

Messmates

When Saddam Hussein was pulled from his spider hole looking like a bedraggled Walt Whitman after a month-long poetry slam, I experienced joy not just as an American, but as someone whose spirit has been knitted to those of my liberated Iraqi brothers. For a day, anyway, I felt like an Iraqi, and celebrated like an Iraqi. I ululated. I hit despised objects with house slippers. I planted roadside explosives for a week from now, when my unbridled ebullience will turn to amnesiac ingratitude.

Still, while I'm not defending Saddam Hussein—that's what God made Dominique de Villepin for—I have a bone to pick with the coverage of his capture. Here was a tyrant who'd been responsible for latching jumper cables to testicles, who'd amputated people's ears, and who'd murdered countless innocents. But the only fault nitpicking eyewitnesses harped on was along the lines of this AP headline: "Saddam's Hideaway Found Cluttered, Messy."

Reporters and soldiers alike called it a "miserable hole," noted food "half-eaten out on the shelves," and said "it smelled really bad." In pornographic detail, they portrayed the place as strewn with clothes and Mars bars, dirty plates amassing in the sink, as if, with the world's fiercest fighting force pursuing him, Saddam should have had time to load the dishwasher.

If there's a note of sympathy in my plaint, it's because clutter-wise, I'm something of a Saddam Hussein myself. While my immaculate wife runs a tight housekeeping ship, any space I'm in charge of gets buried under stacks of paper, press badges, road souvenirs, and other dry goods that make both my home and work offices look like archaeological-dig-meets-compost-heap. My car is a four-cylinder filing cabinet so packed with junk that I haven't successfully transported a passenger in years. The last one who braved a ride had to sit on six inches of yellowed newspapers and wedge her feet up on the dashboard, since legspace was long ago lost to my old phone-book collection.

My work office is in such disarray that once, when I hosted an OSHA inspector for a story I was reporting, he accused me of "trashing it on purpose," even though I'd tidied up before his arrival. Coworkers have noticed. My boss's assistant even took to leaving subtle hints, like shutting my door and turning out the lights. When that didn't work, she came through with a trash can, pitching old files and priceless pieces of correspondence, like my Publisher's Clearing House winner's notice, which would've afforded me the financial freedom to quit my job, instead of spending my days scribbling columns like this one.

My home office is much scarier. The last time the floor was visible, Jesse Ventura was considered sane, and Tina Brown was "v. hot." My wife, who was once ashamed of it, now reveres it as a tourist attraction, bringing houseguests up to snap pictures. One was so overcome with awe that he actually dove into the pile the way children do into those plastic ball-pits at Chuck E. Cheese's. Recently, we nearly lost our electrician, who slipped while installing a phone line, and was temporarily trapped behind a box. Beneath years' worth of books, magazines, Nexis piles, etc., sit my lost car keys, credit cards, and God knows what else. Even my dog nearly became a casualty when the door shut behind him, and his barks for help couldn't be heard through the walls, muffled by junk.

My friends politely suggest that mine is not a lifestyle choice, but an early sign of mental illness. They've tried to help me turn things around, by putting me onto de-cluttering gurus like the online "Flylady"—the "FLY" stands for "finally loving yourself." Her acolytes concentrate on their houses' "hot spots" and cleaning "zones." They strive to finish their chores early so they can write in online forums that they're about to "goof off all morning at the Christmas brunch program. . . . Chocolate WILL be involved!"

The Flylady is all about routines. She recommends shining your sink before bed each night, then giving yourself "cool down" time. "I like bubble baths!" she writes. I don't. I relate more keenly to the story of the infamous Collyer brothers—a pair of gold-plated eccentrics who, in the 1940s, were found dead in their house, which was packed with 180 tons of clutter—everything from a horse's jawbone to an X-ray machine. Disabled Homer had starved to death after brother Langley was crushed by a pile of junk while tunneling through to deliver food. They died for their craft—kind of inspiring to us packrats. It's how I see myself going.

So come into my spider hole, Flylady. Unlike Saddam, nobody's taking me out alive.

Matt Labash

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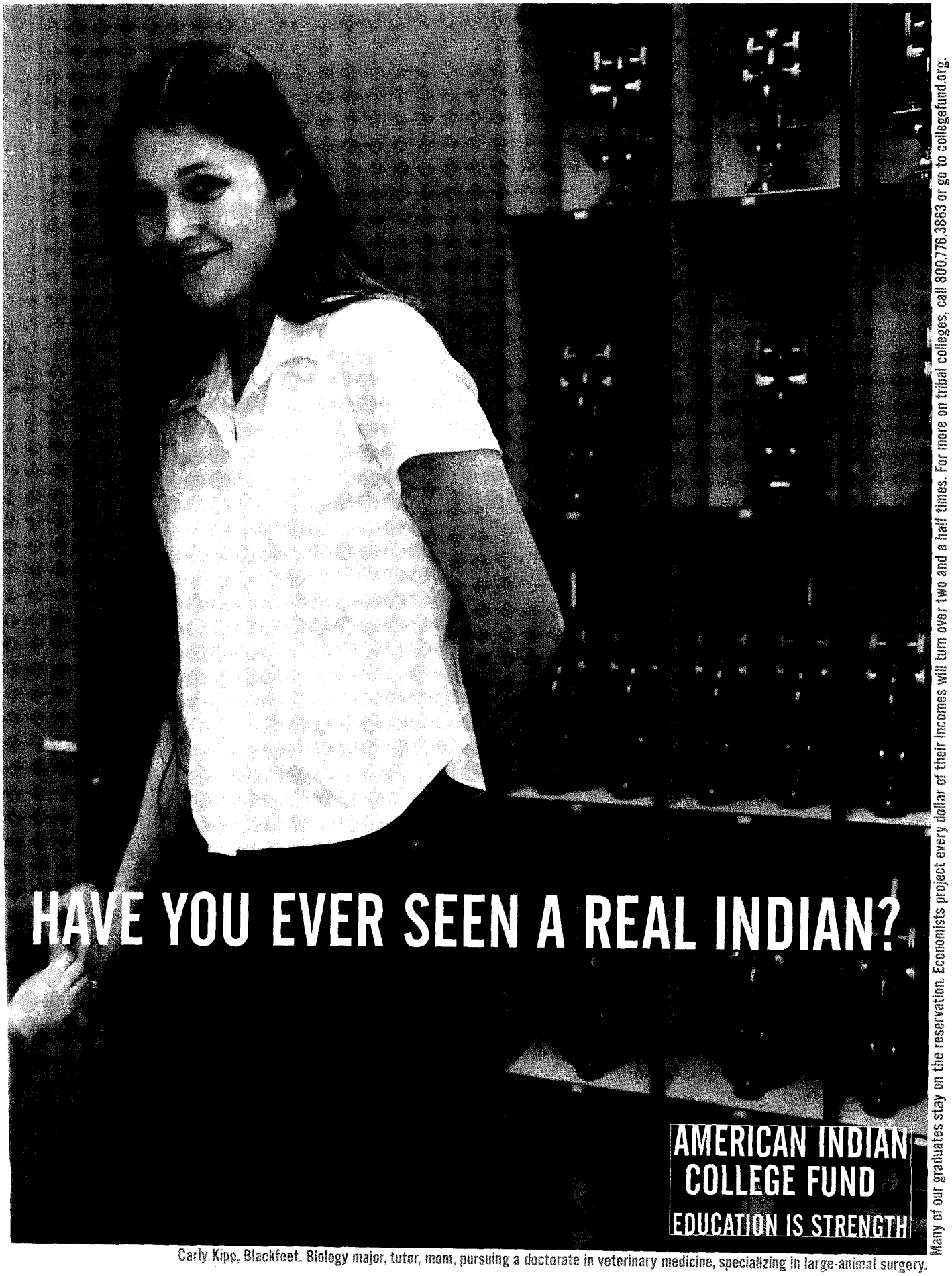

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Carly Kipp, Blackfeet. Biology major, tutor, mom, pursuing a doctorate in veterinary medicine, specializing in large-animal surgery.

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Correspondence

Trial Run

I found William Tucker's "In Defense (sort of) of Trial Lawyers" (Dec. 15) well written, and he is most correct in his assertion that Republicans must avoid the temptation to turn their well-founded opposition to irresponsible liability awards into infantile "lawyer bashing." Although the trial bar certainly falls more into the "D" column come Election Day, there is, as Tucker points out, a significant contingent of conservative trial attorneys whom the GOP risks alienating further if it falls into the trap of vilifying the entire legal profession.

Nonetheless, I feel that Tucker's article is critically flawed in its reliance on the assumption that "the trial lawyers have made America into a healthier, safer, fairer place to live." As a person who works hard on a daily basis to improve my patients' health, I have found no allies in the trial bar, and find it comical that someone actually believes that *lawyers* have made America healthier. Such a sweeping statement needs to be backed up by more than a few anecdotal instances where the trial bar might have helped someone. In fact, virtually all of the scholarly evidence that I know of (reports by the American Medical Association, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Institute of Medicine, etc.) shows that fear of the trial bar actually results in the hiding of medical mistakes where they cannot be appropriately addressed and in a more adversarial relationship between physician and patient.

Perhaps individual trial lawyers may deserve a second look before we condemn them, but the current liability system does not need Tucker's apologia. It already has plenty of advocates.

Rob Oldham
Birmingham, AL

Until I read William Tucker's "In Defense (sort of) of Trial Lawyers," I could not recall any Republican (other than me) having anything positive to say about tort litigators.

Certainly the current argument that paying damages would be inconvenient for the party causing the damages makes no sense when compared with the inconvenience of a person who might have lost a business, or be physically incapacitated for the rest of his life, or dead. And certainly there are numerous smaller cases where individuals or businesses are damaged in amounts that a reasonable damages settlement or verdict would address without seriously injuring the company that caused the damages.

But one has to keep in mind that it is important for courts to follow policies that protect the public; and it is illogical to condemn damages awards that could financially damage or even bankrupt a company if the company is acting in a pattern that is harmful to the public good. The anti-trial-lawyer position is to forget about the problems these companies have already caused, rap their knuckles with a ruler, and hope they won't do it again.

Don Coker
Mobile, AL

Compatibility Test

In "The Muddle of the Moderate Muslim," by Katherine Mangu-Ward (Dec.22), my quotation about Islamic systems of government and democracy was abridged, which changed its meaning. I said that Islam and democracy are not *easily* compatible. This is undoubtedly as much for political as doctrinal reasons. The documentation compiled by Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom demonstrates that in the major Islamic law (*sharia*) states of contemporary times—Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Afghanistan—individual rights to freedom of religion and expression, as well as the legal equality of women and religious minorities, are not recognized. As one of the consequences, in all these states Muslim political dissidents have been arrested for the capital crimes of blasphemy and apostasy for having proposed liberal reforms or criticized the government.

Furthermore, when Islamic constitutions provide that no law can be repugnant to Islam, as the Iranian and the proposed Afghanistan constitutions do, legislative power risks being undermined by unelected *sharia* jurists and clerics. Professor Abou El Fadl is one of the few who possess the scholarship in both legal traditions needed to identify and develop the democratic potential in the Koran. He believes that "for Muslims, a democratic commitment cannot be made in a doctrinal vacuum, but will require that it reconcile with their religious convictions." He has undertaken efforts in this direction, making arguments that individual human rights are moral, "divine law must be distinguished from fallible human interpretations," and the "state should not pretend to embody divine sovereignty and majesty." This work may be more than a motive for some in the Egyptian press to discredit him.

Nina Shea
Washington, DC

The Antiwar Prayer

I have been seriously misrepresented in your Dec. 22 Scrapbook. I do not believe that America is a "fascist state," nor do I pray every day for my country's "defeat." It would be nice if you checked your facts before publishing such tripe. I am indeed opposed to "preemptive" wars as contrary to the just war tradition, and I am opposed to profiteering in Iraq. And if you are really interested in the content of my daily prayers, I pray above all that the poor people of Iraq will be spared a civil war.

George Hunsinger
Princeton Theological Seminary
Princeton, NJ

The Editors reply: If Prof. Hunsinger doesn't pray for the defeat of his country, then he shouldn't have said that he does, as we are told he did at the December meeting of the American Academy of Religion. And if Prof. Hunsinger wishes to clarify what he meant by the things he said at that meeting, then he needs to return phone calls placed to his Princeton office.

• • •

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The Democrats' Dean Dilemma

We don't claim to understand the mind of Howard Dean. With back-room assistance from a small army of Democratic party foreign policy brahmins, Dean recently produced a long, formal speech on "Meeting the Security Challenges of the New Century." The speech was advertised as a reassuring demonstration that Dean's overall thinking about world affairs, notwithstanding the spicy antiwar rhetoric that has propelled his campaign so far, lies safely within the bipartisan consensus that's governed American politics for 50-plus years. The choreography was designed this way: Dean delivered his address to a sober think-tank audience in Los Angeles on December 15, with none other than Warren Christopher, the Ghost of Democratic State Departments Past, looking over his shoulder. And Dean's actual text, though it hardly represented a WEEKLY STANDARD view of things, might certainly, most of it, have been written by Christopher himself.

Indeed, even on Iraq, the former Vermont governor appeared eager to recast himself as something other than a baying full-mooner. Toward the beginning of his remarks, Dean said the war was launched "in the wrong way, at the wrong time, with inadequate planning, insufficient help, and at unbelievable cost." Toward the end, Dean said the war was "ill-considered." But nowhere in his Los Angeles speech did Dean say the war was essentially *unwarranted*. At one point, in fact, he seemed to suggest that the United States might ultimately and legitimately have "found no alternative to Saddam's ouster."

Tonally, at least, all this was very new for Howard Dean.

And yet, there was that single, striking sentence that wasn't new, tonally or in any other respect, the one where Dean's ferocious vanity and corresponding inability to concede even the tiniest speck of credit to George W. Bush peeked through. "The capture of Saddam"—announced the day before—"has not made America safer," Dean sniffed.

Furthermore, reverting to instinct during the Q&A session that followed his carefully scripted Los Angeles pronouncement, Dean wasted little time stripping himself bare of precisely that "moderate" image it had been intended to win him. There he was, in his force-averse, neo-isolationist skivvies, advancing a semi-coherent and alarmingly stingy "Dean Doctrine" that would circumscribe the exercise of U.S. military power abroad. The engagement of American arms should be "confined," Dean said, to three sets of circumstances only: One, if we've already been attacked, as with Afghanistan. Two, if we know we're about to be attacked. ("I hope we would have done something," Dean mused aloud, vaguely echoing the bizarre-o conspiracy theory he'd floated a week before, "had we known Osama bin Laden was going to run planes into the World Trade Center.") And three, though only "in some instances, when other world bodies fail," it's okay for the United States to intervene militarily in order "to stop genocide."

Saddam Hussein, of course, would not have qualified for American attention under the "Dean Doctrine." Not this year, anyway: "I would have supported intervention during the Shiite massacres," the doctrinaire Dr. Dean casually allowed, "but those occurred 11 years ago." Nor, it seems, would Saddam's associations with terrorism and determination to acquire weapons of mass destruction have prompted President Dean to take action, even had the evidence been contemporaneous and undebatable. North Korea, after all, "may or may not possess nuclear weapons, but surely, at least at this time, is not an imminent threat."

Nevertheless, "I would not have hesitated to go into Iraq," Dean concluded, despite having just ruled it out as a matter of principle, "had the United Nations given us permission."

You can drag a man to the foreign-policy center with a big, subtle, ghostwritten speech. But you can't make him *think* from the center if he really doesn't want to. And let's face it: Howard Dean really doesn't want to. That "capture of Saddam has not made America safer" remark earned him three days of stinging criticism from his presidential-primary rivals and from an increasingly skeptical press corps. Whereupon Dean apparently decided that he'd made a mistake even attempting to reposition himself as a national-security moderate. Not only is America no safer for the capture of Saddam, he growled at a subsequent press conference in New Hampshire, but "we are no safer

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today than the day the planes struck the World Trade Center"; the defenestration of the Taliban from Kabul counts for *nothing*.

"I think the Democratic party has to offer a clear alternative to the American people," says the new, new Howard Dean. The "Washington Politics-as-Usual Club"—not just the Republicans, but also all those "Washington Democrats" who "fell meekly into line" over Bush's ghastly foreign war—must be swept aside.

As we say, we don't understand how a frontrunning, major-party presidential candidate could have come to think like this. The most interesting theory we've heard—and it's only a theory; no one can know for sure—is that sometime in the 1990s, French intelligence agents snuck into Dean's bedroom in Burlington and brainwashed the poor man.

But even if true, that still wouldn't explain the corollary mystery: How could it be that the very "Washington Democrats" who so recently "fell meekly into line" over war with Iraq are now just as meekly acquiescing in the institutional conquest of their party by a presidential candidate who openly derides them for it—and who openly repudiates, in the process, foreign policy views to which the vast majority of them remain personally and politically committed?

What genuinely serious figure in the national Democratic party, for example, believes that the United States must never undertake an overseas military initiative unless Howard Dean's strictly delineated conditions have first been met (or unless Kofi Annan has "given us permission")? Men like Columbia University economist Jeffrey Sachs might believe such stuff. But Sachs, one of the 15 "distinguished experts" now advising the Dean campaign on foreign policy, is, not to put too fine a point on it, a crank. The war with Iraq, he says, was "really about" control of Middle Eastern oil, consistent with a long-ago-hatched plot by a cabal of neoconservative defense intellectuals. "We need to leave, not reconstruct," Sachs told a teach-in audience as recently as December 17. "Don't buy their claim that now we're there we have to make it work. It can't work!" And "we cannot make it work," and "we need to just get out."

Democrats like Clinton administration national security adviser Anthony Lake and Carter administration CIA director Stansfield Turner, by contrast, cannot possibly believe such arrant, irresponsible nonsense. So why, then, have they, too, seen fit—just like crazy Jeffrey Sachs—to lend their names and reputations to the Dean crusade?

Peter Steiner

Why, for that matter, is it only now, when it may already be too late to deny him the nomination, that Dean's intra-party rivals have finally (and falteringly) begun to offer Democratic voters a sustained and pointed warning about the defense-policy program he's outlined—and about the general-election risks that program clearly entails?

Why, come to think of it, should even so partisan, politically sophisticated, and overwhelmingly popular a Democrat as Hillary Clinton have so far proved unwilling to dissociate herself from the outlandishness of foreign-policy Deanism? Judging from her own recent major address on the subject—delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, on the same day her husband's would-be legatee was speaking in Los Angeles—Senator Clinton's views could not be less like those of Howard Dean.

In the best interests of her party—and her nation—shouldn't Senator Clinton say so? Shouldn't she and all the other "Washington Democrats" at the very least refuse to surrender without a fight?

—David Tell, for the Editors

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Tocqueville and College Football

A defense of the Bowl Championship Series.

BY JEFFREY H. ANDERSON

As a political science professor who created one of the computer rankings that determine which two college football teams will meet in the Bowl Championship Series (BCS), I find the controversy over the rankings mirrors American political culture. Indeed, it shows American character is still as Alexis de Tocqueville described it: We swing on a pendulum with excessive deference to popular opinion at one extreme, excessive deference to authoritative rule at the other. On the one hand, Americans embrace direct democracy; on the other, they embrace rule by "experts," whether in the bureaucracy or on the Supreme Court. The moderate middle ground of representative government is often distrusted.

Football fans swing between the same two extremes, as we shall see. But first a word about the BCS for those who do not follow it. Until 1998, college football had no organized national championship game but a number of traditional bowl games featuring top teams. That year, the Rose, Sugar, Orange, and Fiesta Bowls agreed to host the annual BCS championship game on a rotating basis. Playing in the game are the two top teams in the BCS standings, which combine four elements, each weighed evenly: a team's average ranking in the AP's poll of sportswriters and ESPN/*USA Today*'s poll of college coaches, its number of losses, its strength of schedule (determined by opponents' and opponents' opponents' won-lost records), and its average score in seven computer rankings (actually in six, as the lowest is dropped). Bonus points for wins over top-10 teams are added after the initial rankings are computed.

This season, Oklahoma was the only undefeated team and was the consensus No. 1 team, until the Sooners lost badly in their last game. After Oklahoma's loss, USC and LSU vaulted ahead of Oklahoma in the coaches' and sportswriters' polls. But six of the seven computer rankings (including mine, the Anderson & Hester Rankings) put Oklahoma and LSU ahead of USC. The BCS's strength-of-schedule ratings showed that Oklahoma's was the hardest schedule of the three teams, while USC's was easiest. Among the top three teams, only Oklahoma had a victory over another top-10 team. When all of these BCS components were weighed together, Oklahoma finished first and LSU a close second, with USC an even closer third. This means Oklahoma will play LSU for the championship this year in the Sugar Bowl on January 4.

The public outcry was loud and immediate: How dare the BCS leave out USC, thereby defying public opinion as registered by the media and coaches' polls? Perhaps most striking was the nearly complete absence of any attempt to defend the polls' judgments as correct. Their correctness was held to be self-evident. The consensus view, expressed on ABC's BCS selection show, ESPN's follow-up broadcast, and apparently in living rooms and barrooms across the nation (judging by emails I received), was something along the lines of, "The polls have USC No. 1, yet the Trojans are not No. 1 in the BCS standings; therefore, the BCS standings are clearly wrong." This recalls Tocqueville's comment that in America, "the majority . . . lives in perpetual adoration of itself."

And what is the favored solution? In their zeal for overthrowing a BCS system that does not unquestioningly embrace public opinion, fans are willing to leave behind their customary place at the altar of public opinion only if they are allowed to transport themselves to their other favorite altar, that of authoritative rule. Let's scrap the BCS system and create a "panel of experts" to determine results, they say. They'll know which teams to pick.

The BCS standings, on the other hand, embody the moderate middle ground of public opinion tempered and modified by reasonable thought and more objective standards of analysis. But as in American politics as a whole, this reasonable middle ground between unchecked popular rule and unchecked rule by authorities is a lonely place.

In all walks of life, it is increasingly common for the god of public opinion to be thoughtlessly honored. When, on the fortieth anniversary of Kennedy's assassination, CNN asked Americans whether the United States would have become involved in Vietnam had Kennedy not been assassinated, the roughly 40 percent "no" response was presented not as evidence of Americans' ignorance that the United States already *was* involved at that point, but as an important finding to be taken seriously. When children enter our public schools, they are encouraged not to learn what other people thought about things, but rather to "think for themselves"—which is crucial, but also fruitless without insights from beyond one's own mind or beyond the minds of one's similarly underdeveloped peers. When direct democracy trumps representative

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democracy, this development is often praised on the grounds that "the people have spoken." In each of these arenas, we have somehow lost sight of the crucial question: Have the people spoken well, or are they just babbling?

Questioning public opinion is not elitist but rather is necessary to encourage minority views that might be more just, though initially less widely held. Tocqueville argued in *Democracy in America* that Americans were becoming (if they were not already in the 1830s) slaves to public opinion. "I do not know any country," he writes, "where, in general, less independence of mind and genuine freedom of discussion reign than in America." An unwillingness to challenge the prevailing majority view is abundantly evident in response to the BCS, but it is characteristic of our politics as well. As Tocqueville writes, "In that immense crowd which throngs the avenues to power in the United States, I found very few men who displayed that manly candor and masculine independence of opinion which frequently distinguished the Americans in former times, and which constitutes the leading feature in distinguished characters wheresoever they may be found." (Certainly Sen. Joseph Biden did nothing to demonstrate any "masculine independence of opinion" when he parroted public opinion about the BCS at a recent Senate hearing. Biden declared the system "un-American" but provided no reasoned argument with which to buttress his grandstanding.)

Tocqueville also predicted the opposite swing of the pendulum, toward embracing authoritarian rule. While this would seem a most unlikely result in a nation so generally devoted to popular opinion and popular rule, it nevertheless does occur. For example, there is hardly a domestic policy issue of note that the federal courts are not now in some prominent way involved in deciding.

Perhaps the key to this phenomenon is found in Tocqueville's insight that our love of equality—which he thought to be Americans' defining trait—can be satisfied either by all of us equally becoming rulers, or by all of us equally becoming subjects. This helps explain both Americans' distrust of Congress and the comparatively greater trust they display toward unelected government officers. And it helps to explain how such deference to authority can prevail among a people who otherwise so fervently embrace popular opinion and popular rule.

There is, of course, a middle ground between these extremes. Politically that middle ground is republicanism, which incorporates popular opinion but also checks it, limiting majority tyranny. And love them or hate them, the Bowl Championship Series standings represent a similar moderate middle ground in the world of sports. The BCS formula combines public opinion (the polls) with more objective standards (computer rankings, strength of schedule rankings, etc.) that refine such opinion. As such, it is a system combining popular opinion and justice, neither fully rewarding nor fully eschewing either.

One might add a final similarity between college football fans and Americans generally: Fans who clamor for a generic playoff fail to foresee what ill-effects such a change would have on college football's uniquely dramatic regular season. This failure to foresee the unintended effects of policy change is also a common feature of our politics. (On the whole, however, college football fans admirably exhibit far more respect for tradition than is typical in our society.)

Embracing the extremes of unchecked public opinion and authoritative rule is unhealthy. Both in the world of college football and, more important, in that of American politics, we should try to stop this wildly swinging pendulum in the middle. From that middle position, but only from that position, we can reasonably hope that what James Madison called "the cool and deliberate sense of the community" will prevail. ♦

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It Doesn't Get Any Better Than This

In the past few weeks, President Bush has been lucky and good. BY FRED BARNES

PRESIDENT BUSH has gotten a bigger reelection boost in a shorter period of time than any other president ever. And that may be putting it mildly. Yes, Sherman's taking of Atlanta in early September 1864 was critical to Lincoln's reelection, and Bill Clinton's signing of welfare reform in 1996 assured him a second term. But those don't quite match the gust of good news for Bush between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Here's the list: capture of Saddam Hussein, Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi's about-face, enactment of a prescription drug entitlement, signing of the first rollback of *Roe* v. *Wade*, fastest economic growth in 19 years, quickest pace in worker productivity gains in 20 years, two-decade high in increased manufacturing activity, significant drop in jobless claims, lowest underlying rate of inflation in 38 years, and rock-bottom interest rates. Oh, yes, the stock market: A week before Christmas, the Dow's up 23 percent for the year, 4 percent since Thanksgiving.

Let's not give Bush a big head and declare his reelection a done deal. He still faces daunting problems (job losses, post-Saddam insurgency in Iraq, al Qaeda, nukes in Iran and North Korea, energized opponents at home). But, to Bush's credit, the string of accomplishments on the eve of 2004 are mostly his own doing. It turns out more troops were not needed in Iraq, at least not to seize Saddam. The answer, as the administration insisted, was better intelligence. Bush's tax cuts, nearly everyone agrees, were the catalyst in rejuvenating the economy. A full-blown recovery is now a given. Bush had helpers like Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan and a good bit of luck. As the baseball saying goes, it's better to be lucky than good. It's better still to be in Bush's situation, lucky and good.

Landov

Grabbing Saddam produced a reversal in the Iraq debate. Saddam at large was the symbol of Bush's losing the battle of postwar Iraq. His captivity is the symbol of Bush's winning that battle. For months now, Saddam will be the story—his imprisonment, his interrogation, his atrocities, his prosecution, his punishment. When the spotlight is on Saddam in chains, Bush gains. If the terrorism directed by Saddam's cronies continues to abate, as it did in the days after his capture, Bush will gain further. In any case, he's no longer on defense in the debate over Iraq.

His foes are no longer on offense. Democrats were flummoxed by Saddam's capture. Columnist Robert Novak reported that Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, a top deputy to Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle, had taped a radio statement, sneering at the prospects of seizing Saddam. It was to be broadcast the day after Saddam was captured. The Democratic presidential candidates, along with Sen. Hillary Clinton, responded to the capture with the cliché that Bush must "internationalize" the war in Iraq. This was a non sequitur: Because Bush's policy in Iraq was working, it was time to change the policy. That is not a serious argument.

Democrats exuded an air of unreality. They called for the United Nations to assume a bigger role in Iraq just days after Secretary General Kofi Annan announced the United Nations had no intention of doing that. They said Bush should recruit more foreign troops to replace American soldiers in Iraq. But there was no evidence any country was prepared to dispatch troops. And the Saddam capture led to more conspiracy-theorizing by Democrats. Congressman Jim McDermott of Washington suggested Saddam was ripe for seizure any time and Bush had planned the event for political gain. Of course this clashed with the standard Democratic criticism that Bush had lost control of postwar Iraq.

Democratic presidential frontrunner Howard Dean reacted with remarkable pigheadedness. He inserted in a speech the claim that Saddam's jailing did not make America safer. Earlier he had said Saddam was a "threat" to the United States. So Dean would have it that a threat was removed with no gain in safety for America. That defies logic. Besides, documents from Saddam's briefcase

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showed he was in regular touch, by courier, with terrorist cells perpetrating attacks on American soldiers and Iraqis. Once that was known, Dean could have revised his view. He didn't. He tossed out three charges against the president. One, Bush had claimed a direct link between al Qaeda and Saddam and later retracted the claim. Two, Bush had said the United States knew where Saddam's weapons of mass destruction were. Three, Bush had declared Saddam an "imminent danger." Dean was wrong on all three counts.

When was Bush lucky? That occurred as he dispatched former secretary of state James Baker on a mission to win debt relief for Iraq. Months ago, the administration made it known that countries not helping in Iraq would be ineligible for contracts to rebuild the country. The press missed this. Shortly before Baker departed for France and Germany, a routine Defense Department memo formally limiting the contracts was reported in the press. The belated scoop was the lucky part for the president. It created a media firestorm that Bush exploited to reiterate his policy and show the United States wouldn't be "played for patsies," as a White House official said. And the French and others finally "understood the ground rule is you've got to help" in Iraq. The result: They began to help, welcoming Baker and promising to forgive some or all of the Iraqi debt amassed by Saddam.

The White House has refrained from gloating. "We're happy with success, but we're looking forward" to 2004, Bush adviser Karl Rove said. Bush has a theme, the "ownership society," and a fat agenda that includes "lifetime savings accounts"—essentially tax-free IRAs with no penalties for withdrawal—and Social Security investment accounts. Bush's idea is to give Americans ownership of their money for retirement, health care, and everything now in the hands of government or other providers. Achieving all this would be a major feat, almost as amazing as what Bush wrought in late 2003. ♦

The Clinton View of Iraq-al Qaeda Ties

Connecting the dots in 1998, but not in 2003.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

ARE AL QAEDA'S links to Saddam Hussein's Iraq just a fantasy of the Bush administration? Hardly. The Clinton administration also warned the American public about those ties and defended its response to al Qaeda terror by citing an Iraqi connection.

For nearly two years, starting in 1996, the CIA monitored the al Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, Sudan. The plant was known to have deep connections to Sudan's Military Industrial Corporation, and the CIA had gathered intelligence on the budding relationship between Iraqi chemical weapons experts and the plant's top officials. The intelligence included information that several top chemical weapons specialists from Iraq had attended ceremonies to celebrate the plant's opening in 1996. And, more compelling, the National Security Agency had intercepted telephone calls between Iraqi scientists and the plant's general manager.

Iraq also admitted to having a $199,000 contract with al Shifa for goods under the oil-for-food program. Those goods were never delivered. While it's hard to know what significance, if any, to ascribe to this information, it fits a pattern described in recent CIA reporting on the overlap in the mid-1990s between al Qaeda-financed groups and firms that violated U.N. sanctions on behalf of Iraq.

The clincher, however, came later in the spring of 1998, when the CIA secretly gathered a soil sample from 60 feet outside of the plant's main gate. The sample showed high levels of O-ethylmethylphosphonothioic acid, known as EMPTA, which is a key ingredient for the deadly nerve agent VX. A senior intelligence official who briefed reporters at the time was asked which countries make VX using EMPTA. "Iraq is the only country we're aware of," the official said. "There are a variety of ways of making VX, a variety of recipes, and EMPTA is fairly unique."

That briefing came on August 24, 1998, four days after the Clinton administration launched cruise-missile strikes against al Qaeda targets in Afghanistan and Sudan (Osama bin Laden's headquarters from 1992-96), including the al Shifa plant. The missile strikes came 13 days after bombings at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killed 257 people—including 12 Americans—and injured nearly 5,000. Clinton administration officials said that the attacks were in part retaliatory and in part preemptive. U.S. intelligence agencies had picked up "chatter" among bin Laden's deputies indicating that more attacks against American interests were imminent.

The al Shifa plant in Sudan was largely destroyed after being hit by six Tomahawk missiles. John McWethy, national security correspondent for ABC News, reported the story on August 25, 1998:

> Before the pharmaceutical plant was reduced to rubble by American cruise missiles, the CIA was secretly gathering evidence that ended up putting the facility on America's target list. Intelligence sources say their agents clandestinely gathered soil samples outside the plant and found, quote, "strong evidence" of

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a chemical compound called EMPTA, a compound that has only one known purpose, to make VX nerve gas.

Then, the connection:

The U.S. had been suspicious for months, partly because of Osama bin Laden's financial ties, but also because of strong connections to Iraq. Sources say the U.S. had intercepted phone calls from the plant to a man in Iraq who runs that country's chemical weapons program.

The senior intelligence officials who briefed reporters laid out the collaboration. "We knew there were fuzzy ties between [bin Laden] and the plant but strong ties between him and Sudan and strong ties between the plant and Sudan and strong ties between the plant and Iraq." Although this official was careful not to oversell bin Laden's ties to the plant, other Clinton officials told reporters that the plant's general manager lived in a villa owned by bin Laden.

Several Clinton administration national security officials told THE WEEKLY STANDARD last week that they stand by the intelligence. "The bottom line for me is that the targeting was justified and appropriate," said Daniel Benjamin, director of counterterrorism on Clinton's National Security Council, in an emailed response to questions. "I would be surprised if any president—with the evidence of al Qaeda's intentions evident in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam and the intelligence on [chemical weapons] that was at hand from Sudan—would have made a different decision about bombing the plant."

The current president certainly agrees. "I think you give the commander in chief the benefit of the doubt," said George W. Bush, governor of Texas, on August 20, 1998, the same day as the U.S. counterstrikes. "This is a foreign policy matter. I'm confident he's working on the best intelligence available, and I hope it's successful."

Wouldn't the bombing of a plant with well-documented connections to Iraq's chemical weapons program, undertaken in an effort to strike back at Osama bin Laden's terrorist network, seem to suggest the Clinton administration national security officials believed Iraq was working with al Qaeda? Benjamin, who has been one of the leading skeptics of claims that Iraq was working with al Qaeda, doesn't want to connect those dots.

Instead, he describes al Qaeda and Iraq as unwitting collaborators. "The Iraqi connection with al Shifa, given what we know about it, does not yet meet the test as proof of a substantive relationship because it isn't clear that one side knew the other side's involvement. That is, it is not clear that the Iraqis knew about bin Laden's well-concealed investment in the Sudanese Military Industrial Corporation. The Sudanese very likely had their own interest in VX development, and they would also have had good reasons to keep al Qaeda's involvement from the Iraqis. After all, Saddam was exactly the kind of secularist autocrat that al Qaeda despised. In the most extreme case, if the Iraqis suspected al Qaeda involvement, they might have had assurances from the Sudanese that bin Laden's people would never get the weapons. That may sound less than satisfying, but the Sudanese did show a talent for fleecing bin Laden. It is all somewhat speculative, and it would be helpful to know more."

It does sound less than satisfying to one Bush administration official. "So, when the Clinton administration wants to justify its strike on al Shifa," this official tells me, "it's okay to use an Iraq-al Qaeda connection. But now that the Bush administration and George Tenet talk about links, it's suddenly not believable?"

The Clinton administration heavily emphasized the Iraq link to justify its 1998 strikes against al Qaeda. Just four days before the embassy bombings, Saddam Hussein had once again stepped up his defiance of U.N. weapons inspectors, causing what Senator Richard Lugar called another Iraqi "crisis." Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering, one of those in the small circle of Clinton advisers involved in planning the strikes, briefed foreign reporters on August 25, 1998. He was asked about the connection directly and answered carefully.

Q: *Ambassador Pickering, do you know of any connection between the so-called pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum and the Iraqi government in regard to production of precursors of VX?*

PICKERING: *Yeah, I would like to consult my notes just to be sure that what I have to say is stated clearly and correctly. We see evidence that we think is quite clear on contacts between Sudan and Iraq. In fact, al Shifa officials, early in the company's history, we believe were in touch with Iraqi individuals associated with Iraq's VX program.*

Ambassador Bill Richardson, at the time U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, echoed those sentiments in an appearance on CNN's *Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer*, on August 30, 1998. He called the targeting "one of the finest hours of our intelligence people."

"We know for a fact, physical evi-

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dence, soil samples of VX precursor—chemical precursor at the site," said Richardson. "Secondly, Wolf, direct evidence of ties between Osama bin Laden and the Military Industrial Corporation—the al Shifa factory was part of that. This is an operation—a collection of buildings that does a lot of this dirty munitions stuff. And, thirdly, there is no evidence that this precursor has a commercial application. So, you combine that with Sudan support for terrorism, their connections with Iraq on VX, and you combine that, also, with the chemical precursor issue, and Sudan's leadership support for Osama bin Laden, and you've got a pretty clear cut case."

If the case appeared "clear cut" to top Clinton administration officials, it was not as open-and-shut to the news media. Press reports brimmed with speculation about bad intelligence or even the misuse of intelligence. In an October 27, 1999, article, *New York Times* reporter James Risen went back and reexamined the intelligence. He wrote: "At the pivotal meeting reviewing the targets, the Director of Central Intelligence, George J. Tenet, was said to have cautioned Mr. Clinton's top advisers that while he believed that the evidence connecting Mr. Bin Laden to the factory was strong, it was less than ironclad." Risen also reported that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had shut down an investigation into the targeting after questions were raised by the department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (the same intelligence team that raised questions about prewar intelligence relating to the war in Iraq).

Other questions persisted as well. Clinton administration officials initially scoffed at the notion that al Shifa produced any pharmaceutical products. But reporters searching through the rubble found empty aspirin bottles, as well as other indications that the plant was not used exclusively to produce chemical weapons. The strikes came in the middle of the Monica Lewinsky scandal, leaving some analysts to wonder whether President Clinton was following the conspiratorial news-management scenario laid out in *Wag the Dog*, then a hit movie.

But the media failed to understand the case, according to Daniel Benjamin, who was a reporter himself before joining the Clinton National Security Council. "Intelligence is always incomplete, typically composed of pieces that refuse to fit neatly together and are subject to competing interpretations," writes Benjamin with coauthor Steven Simon in the 2002 book *The Age of Sacred Terror*. "By disclosing the intelligence, the administration was asking journalists to connect the dots—assemble bits of evidence and construct a picture that would account for all the disparate information. In response, reporters cast doubt on the validity of each piece of the information provided and thus on the case for attacking al Shifa."

The destroyed al Shifa plant

Reuters / Aladin Abdel Naby

Now, however, there's a new wrinkle. Bush administration officials largely agree with their predecessors. "There's pretty good intelligence linking al Shifa to Iraq and also good information linking al Shifa to al Qaeda," says one administration official familiar with the intelligence. "I don't think there's much dispute that [Sudan's Military Industrial Corporation] was al Qaeda supported. The link from al Shifa to Iraq is what there is more dispute about."

According to this official, U.S. intelligence has obtained Iraqi documents showing that the head of al Shifa had been granted permission by the Iraqi government to travel to Baghdad to meet with Emad al-Ani, often described as "the father of Iraq's chemical weapons program." Said the official: "The reports can confirm that the trip was authorized, but the travel part hasn't been confirmed yet."

So why hasn't the Bush administration mentioned the al Shifa connection in its public case for war in Iraq? Even if one accepts Benjamin's proposition that Iraq may not have known that it was arming al Qaeda and that al Qaeda may not have known its chemicals came from Iraq, doesn't al Shifa demonstrate convincingly the dangers of attempting to "contain" a maniacal leader with WMD?

According to Bush officials, two factors contributed to their reluctance to discuss the Iraq-al Qaeda connection suggested by al Shifa. First, the level of proof never rose above the threshold of "highly suggestive circumstantial evidence"—indicating that on this question, Bush administration policymakers were somewhat more cautious about the public use of intelligence on the Iraq-al Qaeda con-

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nection than were their counterparts in the Clinton administration. Second, according to one Bush administration source, "there is a massive sensitivity at the Agency to bringing up this issue again because of the controversy in 1998."

But there is bound to be more discussion of al Shifa and Iraq-al Qaeda connections in the coming weeks. The Senate Intelligence Committee is nearing completion of its review of prewar intelligence. And although there is still no CIA team assigned to look at the links between Iraq and al Qaeda, investigators looking at documents from the fallen regime continue to uncover new information about those connections on a regular basis.

Democrats who before the war discounted the possibility of any connection between Iraq and al Qaeda have largely fallen silent. And in recent days, two prowar Democrats have spoken openly about the relationship. Evan Bayh, a Democrat from Indiana who sits on the Intelligence Committee, told THE WEEKLY STANDARD, "the relationship seemed to have its roots in mutual exploitation. Saddam Hussein used terrorism for his own ends, and Osama bin Laden used a nation-state for the things that only a nation-state can provide."

And Joe Lieberman, the Connecticut Democrat and presidential candidate, discussed the connections in an appearance last week on MSNBC's *Hardball with Chris Matthews*. Said Lieberman: "I want to be real clear about the connection with terrorists. I've seen a lot of evidence on this. There are extensive contacts between Saddam Hussein's government and al Qaeda and other terrorist groups. I never could reach the conclusion that [Saddam] was part of September 11. Don't get me wrong about that. But there was so much smoke there that it made me worry. And you know, some people say with a great facility, al Qaeda and Saddam could never get together. He is secular and they're theological. But there's something that tied them together. It's their hatred of us." ♦

Joltin' Joe

Lieberman finally steps up to the plate.

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

Newark, Delaware

IT'S A CHILLY December morning, and Senator Joe Lieberman, Democratic candidate for president, is touring the floor of an M Cubed Technologies plant, yukking it up with workers and asking for their votes in the February 3 Delaware primary. M Cubed, which is headquartered in Lieberman's home state of Connecticut, manufactures the material used in bullet-proof vests, and the manufacturing process is loud . . . so loud that it's almost impossible to hear what Lieberman, wearing a pair of safety glasses that make him look oddly like the rock star Bono, is saying to employees.

Later, Lieberman's staff herds a small group of workers, along with assorted media types (reporters outnumber staff two to one), into the factory dining room, where it's easy enough to hear the senator. He delivers his stump speech ("We're never going to be strong in the world until we're strong at home," he says) and asks the employees if they have any questions.

One Gamecube employee tells Lieberman that, as a registered Democrat, he was "kind of offended" when Al Gore endorsed Howard Dean. What, he wants to know, was Lieberman's reaction to the news?

"I was surprised," Lieberman says. "But it only doubles my determination to keep fighting for what I think is right." The Gore endorsement, he adds, underlines the fact that he and Howard Dean are locked "in a fight for the heart and soul" of the Democratic party.

Meet the new Joe Lieberman. He was born sometime between December 9, the day Al Gore endorsed former Vermont governor Howard Dean for president, and December 13, the day the Americans captured Saddam Hussein. The new Lieberman likes to say those two events "crystallized" what's at stake in the upcoming Democratic presidential primaries. "I've got a cause," he tells reporters after the M Cubed staff has left the conference room. "I don't want to replace one divisive leader [Bush] with another [Dean]." The choice facing Democrats, he says, "is between me and Howard Dean."

Well, maybe. It's true that since Gore endorsed Dean, the Lieberman campaign has received 14 times as many contributions as normal. But the contributions were mostly in small-dollar amounts—the average contribution, according to one Lieberman aide, was $80.23. Lieberman can't match the sums raised by Dean's Internet "swarm."

Still, a Lieberman adviser says the campaign's strategy is to act as if the Democratic primary were a two-man race, and hope the media catch on. For the past two weeks, that has seemed to be happening: According to the media, the Gore endorsement and Saddam's capture have "galvanized" (the *Financial Times*), "energized" (the *New York Times*), and otherwise "bolstered" (*PoliticsNH.com*) Lieberman's campaign.

Is the new Joe Lieberman really that new? Lieberman, after all, has long been one of Dean's most outspoken critics. Here he was in July: "Some in my party threaten to send a message that they don't know a just war when they see it, and, more broadly, are not prepared to use our military strength to protect our security and the cause of freedom." And here he was in August, at the National Press Club in Washing-

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ton, D.C.: "A candidate who was opposed to the war against Saddam, who has called for the repeal of all the Bush tax cuts . . . I believe will not offer the kind of leadership America needs to meet the challenges we face today."

A few days before he visited Delaware, Lieberman stepped up his attacks, this time in a speech to workers at Electropac, a circuit-board manufacturer in Manchester, New Hampshire. Lieberman's staff had billed the speech as an economic address, but they tore it up in the hours after Saddam's capture, and broadened its scope to include foreign policy. Yet the overarching theme remained: Lieberman is the "anti-Dean" in the race. Lieberman mentioned Dean by name 22 times. He said Dean would take the United States "backwards." He said Dean had made "a series of dubious judgments and irresponsible statements" throughout the campaign.

Lieberman's differences with Dean on the Iraq war are familiar to voters, but his critique of Dean's economic policies is less well known, and the audience in Manchester perked up at the subject of tax cuts. Dean has said he would repeal all of the Bush tax cuts if elected president. (Of the major Democratic candidates, only Dick Gephardt has the same position.)

By contrast, Lieberman, taking a page from the Clinton playbook, would roll back only those tax cuts that benefit the affluent. "Remember the increases in the Child Tax Credit?" Lieberman asked the Electropac employees, becoming more animated with every sentence: "Under Howard Dean, it's gone. The new 10 percent tax bracket? Gone. The marriage penalty? Right back in place." The difference between Dean and Lieberman, the senator proclaimed, is "$2,700 for the average New Hampshire family."

$2,700 is no small change, Lieberman argued, for New Hampshire's "working families." Which is why Dean is the villain in the Democratic primaries—and Lieberman the presumptive hero: "Dr. Dean," he said, "has become Dr. No."

Speaking of the good doctor, Lieberman says he "climbed into his own spider hole of denial" when he said Saddam's imprisonment did not make America safer. The audience chuckled politely at the leaden metaphor. "How many people here," he asked, surveying the crowd, "agree that we are safer with Saddam Hussein in prison?"

About half the audience raised their hands.

If Lieberman hopes to do well in New Hampshire, he's going to have to raise a lot more hands. Democratic strategists say that unless Lieberman

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places at least third in the January 27 primary, his chances of becoming the Democratic nominee are virtually nil. Having pulled out of the January 19 Iowa Democratic caucuses, Lieberman has put all his resources into New Hampshire. The campaign has run television ads extolling his centrist, pragmatic record. It has paid $15,000 to air a town meeting hosted by Lieberman on WMUR-TV, Manchester's ABC affiliate. And on January 1, Lieberman and his wife, Hadassah, will move into a rented apartment in Manchester, in order to maximize the time they spend in the Granite State.

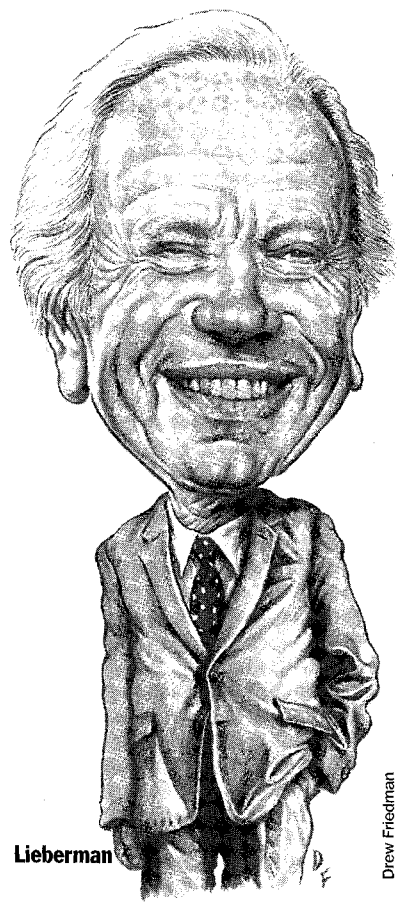
In mid-December, a University of New Hampshire poll showed that Howard Dean still had a commanding lead, with the support of 46 percent of likely Democratic voters. Lieberman was in fourth place, with 7 percent. Those numbers are similar to those found in a Pew Research Center poll, released earlier in December, which had Lieberman tied with General Wesley Clark for third in New Hampshire, each carrying 8 percent of likely Democratic voters.

Lieberman's only hope, says one Democratic strategist, is to rally New Hampshire's "undeclareds"—the independent-minded Republicans and nonregistered Democrats who are eligible to vote in the primary, and who voted for John McCain four years ago. This is why Lieberman mentions Senator McCain on the campaign trail. And it's why Lieberman has run an ad in New Hampshire highlighting his friendship with the Arizona Republican. "Something's happening," the announcer intones in the opening seconds of the ad. "McCain supporters are backing Joe Lieberman."

Are they? In a conference call after the Manchester speech, I asked Lieberman how he plans to reach out to independent voters. "By being myself," he told me. "You know, we like to say on the campaign trail, McCainiacs have become *Liebermaniacs*."

Well, not quite. Lieberman has, as he tells you again and again, the support of a whopping 100 New Hampshire voters who supported McCain in the 2000 Republican primaries. But in the latest University of New Hampshire poll, Lieberman has the support of only 7 percent of independents. Dean has 44 percent.

"It's very hard for me to imagine," says Andy Smith, a political scientist at the University of New Hampshire, when asked whether a Lieberman surge is possible in the final weeks of the campaign. "You have to take into account the changes in the New Hampshire Democratic electorate over the past 10 to 12 years," he explains. Since 1992, when centrist Democrat and Massachusetts senator Paul Tsongas won the Democratic primary, the typical New Hampshire Democrat has grown less conservative. "Inside the Republican party, the ideology has stayed the same," Smith argues. "But the Democrats who moved here after 1992 are far more liberal than the Democrats prior to 1992—they're wealthy, they're educated, and they're incredibly anti-Bush."


Lieberman

Drew Friedman

Lieberman, of course, is not all that different from Bush—at least on Iraq, the issue that energizes the Democratic base. It's worth remembering that McCain's appeal lay in his taking on the Republican establishment, personified by George W. Bush. In this year's Democratic primary, it's Howard Dean that's taking on the establishment, not Joe Lieberman.

Lieberman likes to counter Dean's claim that he represents the "Democratic wing of the Democratic party" by saying, "The Democratic bird doesn't fly with one wing. It needs to have all its wings." But if Howard Dean represents the Democratic wing, and the party needs "all its wings," does that mean Lieberman represents . . . well, the *Republican* wing of the Democratic party? Actually, what Lieberman best represents is the Democratic Leadership Council wing—the Democratic establishment of the Clinton years. And it doesn't seem to be helping him in New Hampshire.

On this Friday morning, however, Lieberman is focused on Delaware. He's visited the state three times since announcing his presidential run, and his wife and daughter have visited frequently. He has the support of Sen. Tom Carper, an influential former governor, and the last poll of likely Democratic voters, back in October, showed Lieberman in the lead. Still, unless he wins in Delaware or any of the other six primary or caucus states on February 3, he will have to drop out.

What then? What if Lieberman loses his "fight for the heart and soul" of the Democratic party? "I'm only thinking of victory," Lieberman says, smiling. "But I do think there's a silent majority in the Democratic party that's pro-growth and strong on security. And I know something else: Dems are unquestionably angry about what happened in the 2000 election, and so many other things that this administration has done since. But elections are won in the center."

The Democratic base, of course, has drifted leftward. So would Lieberman ever consider leaving the Democrats and becoming an Independent? He rejects the idea, yet his answer is a curious one: "I'm a proud Democrat," he cautions. "But my first loyalty is to my country." ♦

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The Gore Curse

When he reemerged to support Dean, Dean should have run the other way. BY NOEMIE EMERY

IN RETROSPECT, it should have been apparent that once Al Gore endorsed Howard Dean and his anti-war platform, and made an impassioned speech excoriating the war and the president, something big would go right in Iraq for the president, and Gore's stock would go down. After all, the last time Al Gore made a well-planned-out plunge into the political maelstrom, it was also great news for George Bush. A little over a year ago, Gore blundered into the 2002 midterms, waving the bloody shirt of the Florida recount. Most of the people Gore stumped for lost; Bush pulled off a historic midterm victory. Gore then returned to his private endeavors. But not for too long.

In early December, perhaps tired of fiddling around with his liberal cable network, Gore emerged to bestow the kiss of death on his party's frontrunner. As Andrew Sullivan presciently joked, "If that doesn't stop the Dean campaign in its tracks, what will?"

Even before Saddam was captured, Gore had driven wedges along all of his party's fault lines, injected personal bitterness into policy differences, and given everyone connected with the other campaigns someone to hate besides Bush. Suddenly, the Democrats' fights had become the main story. Some Democrats were mad at Gore's dissing of Lieberman; others thought being stabbed in the back was too good for Lieberman; some wanted to stab him themselves. Some thought it was about Gore's hatred for Bill Clinton; some thought it was about Gore's hatred for Hillary Clinton; some thought it was the opening round of the 2008 showdown—assuming, of course, that Dean loses.

Dean was supposed to have gained from all this, but he had also been drawn into Gore's private drama, his great gaping wound from the 2000 recount, and his need to get back at his foes: At Bill Clinton, whose indiscretions he thinks with some reason cost him the White House. At Bush, who sits in the seat that Gore wanted. And of course at the war that has given Bush stature. This seems the main reason why Gore, a lifelong hawk till three years ago, has suddenly taken on pacifist feathers. Why did this DLC founder lurch to the far left so quickly? Because it's where the hate is, the dark steamy swamps of the anti-Bush fevers, where murmurs of "fraud," "cheat," and "moron" hold sway. It's where Gore can vent, and claim that it's policy. Which it may not be at all.

Gore and Dean

Getty / Spencer Platt

Nonetheless, for about five days, the bold move to cleave to the left wing of his party looked like a good move—for Gore. Then came Sunday morning, December 14, and it suddenly was revealed that Gore's move was as brilliant as plunging headlong into the stock market in late September 1929.

In this light, one may remember a few other things about Gore. Gore is the man who in 1996 made a tearful speech about the evil tobacco that had caused his sister's death from lung cancer, knowing that four years after her death he had made an emotional speech praising tobacco. He is a man who denied having voted pro-life, when there were votes on record for a bill to declare the fetus a person. He is the man who crafted the "no controlling legal authority" defense in the fund-raising scandal, and thought he had turned in a stellar performance. He is the man who thought it was a good idea to hire Naomi Wolf for $15,000 a month to dress him in earth tones, who showed his disdain for Bush in the first debate by sighing noisily, and who sealed his fate in the third debate by ignoring the counsel of all his advisers and roaming the stage and looming over Bush awkwardly. His seemingly congenital gracelessness was noted by the *Washington Post* in 2002, when he announced his decision not to run in 2004 without first having the courtesy to inform his advisers and counselors. He remains, in short, cursed by himself.

All in all, it was a terrible week for the pampered princes of the Democratic party, the ones who seem to believe they deserve to be president. At the start of the week, there was John F-word Kerry, who was in such a rage at the way he f—d up his campaign that he uncorked a screed at the president that would have destroyed all his chances, if only he had any. And then there was Gore, living out his sad fate as an intelligent man without a scintilla of political instinct or talent, thrashing his way through the national landscape, driving his party toward a dead end. The man who used to attack George W. Bush's "risky schemes" turns out to have a special role in history: He is God's "risky scheme" for the national Democrats, their very own Wile E. Coyote, always most pleased with himself just before things blow up in his face. ♦

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When Lincoln Returned to Richmond

Dispatches from an unlikely culture war

By Andrew Ferguson

1.

Tricks Up Their Sleeves

Abraham Lincoln, with his son Tad in tow, walked around Richmond, Virginia, one day 138 years ago, and if you try to retrace their steps today you won't see much that they saw, which shouldn't be a surprise, of course. The street grid is the same, though, and if you're in the right mood and know what to look for, the lineaments of the earlier city begin to surface, like the outline of a scuttled old scow rising through the shallows of a pond. Among the tangle of freeway interchanges and office buildings you'll come across an overgrown park or a line of red-brick townhouses, an unlikely old belltower or a few churches scattered from block to block, dating to the decades before the Civil War and still giving off vibrations from long ago.

Richmond rests on a group of hills above a bend in the James River. Along the riverbank at the east end of town, where Lincoln began his tour that day, is a long rank of tobacco warehouses, abandoned now, and from behind them the land rises steeply through the commercial district for perhaps half a mile. The Capitol, built from a design by Thomas Jefferson in the eighteenth century, sits on the crest of the hill, and back of it, seven blocks away, is a Georgian mansion that served as the White House of the Confederacy, official residence of President Jefferson Davis. Walk due west from there, past the parking lots, through the plaza surrounding the new glass-and-concrete convention center, and then head south, and before too long you're back at the riverbank, at the ruins of the Tredegar Iron Works, where the cannon and shot were forged that sustained the South through four years of rebellion.

No one knows for sure whether Lincoln and Tad visited Tredegar, or whether they passed by the Works during a carriage ride they took later the same day, but they're there now—so a romantic would say—in the form of a bronze statue. The statue was installed last spring, at the headquarters of the National Park Service's Richmond Civil War battlefield park, which is housed in Tredegar's surviving buildings. In the months leading to its unveiling, the statue created a controversy that reached far beyond Richmond, beyond the United States even, to become an object of international interest—improbably enough, during that season when the world's attention was diverted by another war looming in Iraq. One Richmond official, traveling through Barbados last winter, happened to pick up a newspaper on an excursion plane. "Lincoln Comes to Confederate Capital," read the headline on the back page.

What made the controversy newsworthy was that there should be a controversy at all. To many people, including members of the Richmond establishment—the businessmen, journalists, politicians, rich people, and other well-wired doers of public good, who unanimously supported the statue as both a tourist attraction and a statement of civic resolve—it came as a surprise that anyone should find a tribute to the sixteenth president objectionable. Who could object to Lincoln? As a national symbol he is unavoidable; the piece of real estate he occupies in the American imagination is immeasurably vast. He seems too big even to have an opinion about. It would be like objecting to the moon.

But many people do object, it turns out, and they are almost always well-spoken and well-read and, in percentage terms, not very often crazier than the general population that tends to accept Lincoln's greatness as a fact of life. When I first visited Richmond last March, three months after plans for the statue had been announced and one month before its unveiling, I went to see Bragdon Bowling, who had been stoking the controversy like a steam engine. He gathered petitions, promoted websites, pestered politicians with mail and phone calls and encouraged others to do the same. He enlisted Thomas DiLorenzo, author of a new anti-Lincoln book called *The Real Lin-*

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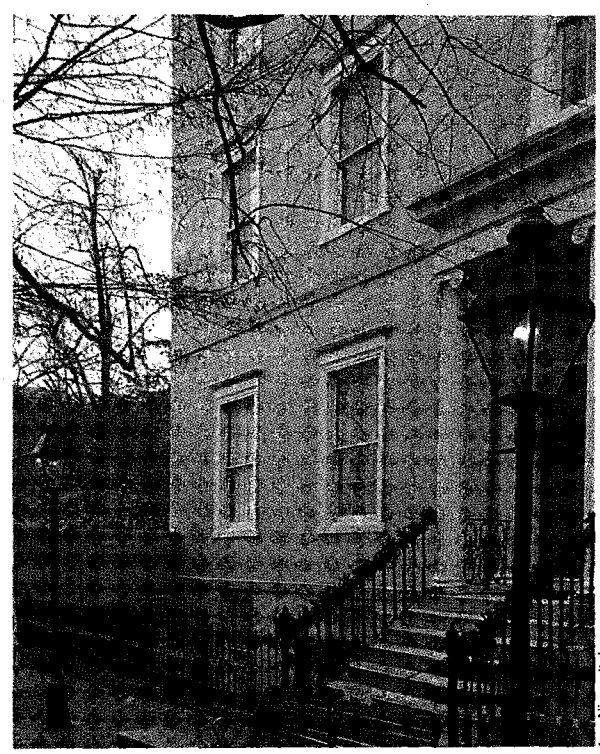
coln, to help him organize a scholarly conference, with the title "Lincoln Reconsidered," to lay out his case as soberly and comprehensively as possible.

This was his duty, he felt. Bowling is division commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and at those moments when he decides that the heritage of the South is being abused, as it was with the placement of a Lincoln statue in the former capital of the Confederacy, he becomes an agitator ex officio. "It's a responsibility you have," he said. "You've got to try to stop it."

He's a tall man with a scholarly air, due largely to an unruly shock of white hair and the wire spectacles that are always slipping down his nose. I met him in the stripped-down living room of one of the rental properties he owns, in a working class suburb north of town. He had to repaint the place and it was covered in tarps. "Sometimes you end up renting to people who simply do not know how to keep house," he said. He turned a paint tub upside down and sat on it, and gestured for me to sit on a butt-sprung couch across from him.

Bowling said he was a native of Virginia—but Northern Virginia, which many native Virginians consider less a part of the commonwealth than a satellite of Washington, D.C., or worse, Maryland, with all its inevitable corruptions.



Lev Nisnevitch

White House of the Confederacy

"It's a zoo now, but it wasn't so bad then," he said of his hometown of Arlington, across the river from Washington. "I got a good education. See, you could still do that in those days. I got taught the usual liberal history, but my teachers were smart people who had high standards. They taught me to think for myself, and that's what I've done.

"Ten years ago I started to learn about my family. I read intensively, everything I could—not just politically correct history but also other history that's been suppressed. That's the way this learning process often starts. My great grandfather served in the Army of Northern Virginia as private under General Robert E. Lee. He was at Sharpsburg—Yankees call it Antietam—at Chancellorsville, other places. And like 90 percent of the soldiers who fought for and served the South, he never owned a slave.

"So—just to show you how the thought process works, for people who are still capable of thinking for themselves—so I thought, well, why is that? If the war is all about slavery, why's he fighting so hard? It didn't fit, you see, with everything I'd been taught about the Civil War. Like all his comrades, my great-grandfather gave everything he had. Why? He did it for his country. The South had bad everything—bad munitions, bad clothing, bad food. But they had the best men. They gave everything they had. And they did not do that to defend slavery."

The war wasn't about slavery for Lincoln, either, Bowling explained. He ticked off the particulars of his indictment of Lincoln. With his generals he invented the concept of Total War, and waged campaigns of unprecedented savagery against noncombatants and private property in the Shenandoah Valley, the March through Georgia, and elsewhere. He was the father of Big Government, vastly expanding the reach of Imperial Washington in ways unthinkable to the country's founders. The Northern victory was a triumph for a commercial culture, controlled by Big Business, over a Southern culture of farms and small towns that asked only to be let alone.

"It was all about power," he said. "Six hundred thousand dead. All so Lincoln and his friends could consolidate their power to tell other people how to live their lives."

What Bowling learned inspired him to join the Sons. He rose through the ranks, and it was in his present capacity, as division commander, that he received a phone call last December from a reporter for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.

"This reporter says he wants a comment on the statue of Lincoln they're going to put up in Richmond.

"I said, 'Huh?'

"He said, 'Yeah, a fellow named Bob Kline has donated a statue of Lincoln and they're going to put it up down at the visitor center at Tredegar. You got a comment?'

"Well, I knew right away what was going on here. And I

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told him so. This is the latest move in a scheme to demonize the Confederate soldier. The Park Service, the politicians, the politically correct historians, they've been doing this all across the country, and now they're doing it right here in Richmond."

I said a statue of Lincoln didn't sound to me like it was demonizing anybody.

"To worship Lincoln, right here, is an insult to the Confederate soldier," he said. "There are 40,000 graves of Confederate soldiers in this city, and I will defend their honor. You see, unlike the politicians and these others, I'm a student of history. I know what this man Lincoln did to this country. I know what the army under his command did to the South. You ever wonder why there are no statues of Abraham Lincoln in the entire southern half of the United States? It's pretty simple: People here remember what he did. Used to be, everybody here remembered. Now only some of us do."

Three times during our interview Bowling was interrupted with phone calls from reporters, seeking comment on one aspect or another of the controversy. He answered them all with a patient repetition of well-rehearsed sound bites. "It is an insult to the Confederate soldier," he said. After the third call I got up to leave, and he walked me outside. The pickup in the driveway had an old NRA sticker: "Charlton Heston is my President."

"This thing is not over yet," he said. "There are a lot of people upset over this, and they may still have a few tricks up their sleeves."

I asked him if he meant someone was planning to prevent the statue from going in.

"If there's anything violent or what have you that happens, the Sons of Confederate Veterans will have no part in that," he said. "People do feel strongly. But the statue will go in," he said. "Probably." He laughed. "Unless it doesn't."

2.

The Uses of Lincoln

While he was alive, Abraham Lincoln was one of the least popular presidents the country has ever known, as most Lincoln scholars acknowledge. The minute he got shot, however, things began looking up for him. Colleagues and subordinates who had considered him dithering or imperious in life fell into inconsolable and very public mourning at word of his death. Political enemies who had prayed for his demise suddenly saw a figure of inviolable moral integrity, farseeing competence, unsearchable wisdom. For four years Henry Ward Beecher, the abolitionist preacher in Brooklyn, had lacerated Lincoln from his pulpit for timidity and hesitation in the face of Southern barbarism. Then came John Wilkes Booth, and Lincoln was dead, and when the body passed through New York on its way to the cemetery in Springfield, Illinois, the old blowhard ascended the same pulpit and became the martyred president's foremost eulogist.

"Dead-dead-dead, he yet speaketh," Beecher said. "Four years ago, O Illinois, we took from your midst an untried man, we return him to you a conqueror. Not thine anymore, but the Nation's; not ours, but the world's. Give him place, ye prairies!"

Everyone was ready to give him place. So quickly and so thoroughly did his countrymen exalt him that causists everywhere found it profitable to enlist his memory. A teetotaler in life, for instance, Lincoln became, once he was safely dead-dead-dead, an unsilenceable advocate of national temperance—or so claimed the Drys of the national temperance movement, which distributed millions of copies of a speech he had made on the subject early in his career. The Drys pressed their Lincoln association for decades, until historians employed by Adolphus Busch, partner of Anheuser and father of Budweiser, discovered a yellowing liquor license that had been issued in the 1830s to a small prairie grocer by the name of . . . Abraham Lincoln. Busch made sure that reproductions of Lincoln's license soon hung on the wall of every tavern in America. They stayed there, consoling drinkers, until the tragic triumph of the Drys in 1919.

By that time Lincoln had been dragooned into causes far more implausible than temperance. On the centennial of his birth, in 1909, the nation's leading white supremacist, a senator from Mississippi named James K. Vardaman, made an unironical pilgrimage to Springfield and claimed "the immortal Lincoln" as his inspiration. "My views and his views," he said later on the Senate floor, "are substantially identical." He would have got an argument, probably, from the American Communist party, which throughout the 1930s put on an annual Lincoln-Lenin Day festival and festooned its Harlem headquarters with his likeness.

Different Americans laid claim to his spiritual life, too. Lincoln was a man of few and ambiguous religious beliefs. He never joined a church, and when he ran for president every pastor in Springfield pointedly refused to endorse him. Yet when his soul took flight he was claimed by most Protestant denominations simultaneously. Unitarians took him as their own, and so did the Christian Scientists, even though the science of divine healing was not revealed to Mary Baker Eddy until a year after Lincoln's death. In 1891, the famed (at the time) seer Nettie Colburn Maynard published a long study called *Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?* She answered her question with an emphatic yes, describing dinner parties during the Civil War at which the president had witnessed a grand piano rising mysteriously off the floor, with the president himself perched atop it—

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unheard of for a teetotaler. More than one Christian publicist saw in Lincoln's life eerie resemblances to the life of Christ. As Jonathan T. Hobson pointed out in his treatise *The Master and His Servant*, both Jesus and Lincoln were born of carpenters and rose from lowly beginnings, both were storytellers, both were killed on Good Friday, both were saviors—of the world, in one case, of the Union, in the other. And in the days before his death each made a profound journey of mercy, Jesus to Jerusalem, Lincoln to Richmond.

Generations of American schoolchildren were taught to be like Lincoln—honest, compassionate, just, resolute. But what we've really wanted is for Lincoln to be like us, whoever we are. As common property, he has become whatever we say he is, and shame on the nitpicker who dares to argue over discrepancies in our diverse accounts. Even in the South this has long been true—even in Richmond, even among the Sons of the Confederacy, as the historian Merrill Peterson demonstrated in his great book, *Lincoln in American Memory*. For a generation after the war, Lincoln was a vague presence in southern mythology, best left undisturbed and unremarked upon, but in time southerners too became reconciled to his greatness. In 1928, the Virginia legislature passed a bill commemorating Lincoln's birthday. "Every southern gentleman now agrees with Lincoln," said the sponsor of the bill, which provoked little dissent. In the late 1940s, when a speaker at a wreath-laying at the Jefferson Davis statue in the U.S. Capitol blamed the war on Lincoln's depravity, a spokesman for the Sons, who had sponsored the ceremony, made sure to repudiate the remarks publicly. A few years later a representative of the Sons laid a wreath, along with a crossed pair of Confederate flags, at the Lincoln Memorial, as an official tribute. "He who abuses Lincoln abuses himself," editorialized the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* in the 1920s, expressing the general view.

Of course, that was long before anybody got the bright idea of building a statue of him in the capital of the Confederacy.

3.

The Limited Edition Lincoln

Robert Kline works out of a large house on Richmond's Main Street, a brick pile built in the Federal style a decade or two before the rebellion. It lies just far enough west of downtown to have escaped the flames in April 1865. A brass nameplate next to the front door identifies it as the headquarters of the United States Historical Society, the company Kline started 30 years ago, after a career in public relations and real estate.

Pedants might complain that the name is a little misleading; Kline's society does not have members or hold conferences in the manner of more conventional historical societies. It is instead "a private nonprofit educational organization," according to its literature, "dedicated to fostering increased awareness and appreciation of America's culture and history." It does its fostering by making and selling "collectibles"—small, heavy things forged of pewter or brass, mounted on polished strips of cherry or little rectangles of marble—that bear a strong resemblance to what many in the nonprofit world call knick-knacks.

A first floor conference room, where I waited for my interview with Mr. Kline, serves as a kind of showroom for the society's handiwork. Collectibles were mounted on walls, standing in ranks on shelves, covering the tops of bureaus, and resting in piles on the floor. All stages of American history were represented. There were miniatures of World War II submarines, minesweepers, destroyers, and PT boats; gilt-rimmed plates featuring famous American homes—Monticello, Graceland—sun-dappled in sylvan settings; reproductions of pewter tankards designed by Paul Revere. President Kennedy was there as a doll delivering his Inaugural Address, one hand tucked in his coat pocket, the other thrust confidently toward the future.

There were replicas of swords—one fashioned after the one George Washington wore at his inauguration, another like the one Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown—and reproductions of famous pistols, and tiny cannons adorned with plaques. There were mounted replicas of "famous canes," and more stained glass than the Sainte Chapelle: familiar, multicolored scenes from Norman Rockwell and from the life of Christ, Calvary next to Valley Forge next to the parting of the Red Sea next to Tom Sawyer and the whitewashed fence, plus a spookily detailed rendering of the Elvis postage stamp, Washington on the Delaware, and cozy Christmas scenes. Dolls of Patrick Henry, FDR, Chuck Yeager, and Clara Barton queued up beside a three-dimensional tableau of the angels hovering over the stable at Bethlehem.

As I marveled at the collection Kline appeared, wearing a sky-blue suit with a wide tie striped in shades of gray. "This is what U.S. Historical Society does," he said, sweeping his arm across the room with evident pride. He's a tall man, with a prominent nose, and very slender; Lincolnesque in stature, almost, though his hair is white now and thin as silk. His voice is soft and so is his handshake. We sat down at a conference table.

"This idea first came to me 20 years ago," he said. "I had already lived here for many years, knew the city well, and loved it. And I thought: Lincoln in Richmond! What an event! What a symbol!" His voice, though frail, still conveys his unmistakable enthusiasm. "The visit to Rich-

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mond should be a big thing in the history of our country. It stands for peace, for reconciliation, all those things that we need more of. So I brought the concept to Virginius Dabney."

In Richmond there are few weightier names to drop than that of Dabney, now deceased but for 40 years a Southern historian of note and, as editor of the *Times-Dispatch*, a legendary defender of the honor of the Confederacy. A *nihil obstat* from Dabney, under normal circumstances, would go far in indemnifying anyone against charges of carpetbaggery.

"Dabney thought it was a wonderful idea, too," Mr. Kline went on. "From there I went to elected officials, off and on over the years. A year or so ago I went to our lieutenant governor, Tim Kaine, and he suggested the park service might be interested in a memorial to Lincoln's visit. And indeed they were very enthusiastic. And now here we are. Sometimes I can't believe it's really about to happen—if we can just get through the next few weeks."

When he talked about the controversy, Mr. Kline's enthusiasm seeped away. He had the look of someone who didn't know what hit him. "Sure, of course, we knew a few die-hards might object here or there. But nothing like this . . . this ugliness."

He made a gesture toward the window. Out on the street a well-fed fellow in a black T-shirt and low-slung Relaxed Fit jeans was holding a hand-painted placard: "Lincoln = War Criminal." He was a holdover from larger demonstrations that had been held outside the society's headquarters in previous weeks. None drew more than twenty demonstrators, according to news accounts. Still, twenty good old boys doing the rebel yell outside your window can be unsettling.

"You should see the mail," Mr. Kline went on. "And my email, oh my. Accusing me of everything they can think of. And now, of course, it's reached the newspaper. Anytime a businessman sees the word 'Impropriety' and his own name in a headline—even if it says 'Cleared of Improprieties'—well, it's just not good, is it?"

Together with city and park service officials, Mr. Kline announced plans for the statue at a press conference last December. The controversy began at once, with the first phone call placed by the first reporter to Brag Bowling and other Sons seeking comment. In keeping with the way public disputes are played out nowadays, the air was soon thick with motive-mongering, personal vituperation, and allegations of criminality. An anonymous website appeared, accusing Kline of exploiting public assets—the Tredegar Visitor Center—for financial gain. This in turn generated hundreds of letters to Virginia newspapers, and then to the commonwealth attorney general demanding an investigation for possible fraud. Some Sons persuaded a local congressman, Virgil Goode, to ask the park service itself to see whether the society's activity was legitimate.

The particulars of the accusations against Kline, the park service, and local officials—all of whom were supposedly acting in self-dealing collusion—were never made completely clear. Baroque accounts of the conspiracy, published on the web and patiently laid out for me by several Sons on condition of anonymity, turned vague at crucial points, thoroughly incomprehensible at others. At the heart of it all was the odd means by which the relevant parties had agreed to finance the statue. It was an arrangement that Kline told me had worked for the society and its business partners on many other occasions. The society would pay for the statue—its commission, design, forging, and transportation to Richmond—and give it to the park service free of charge. Then, to recover its money, the society would sell miniatures of the statue, each forged of genuine bronze, weighing 13 pounds, and tagged with the apparently magical (in the collectibles business) words: "limited edition." Solicitations were already being made by direct mail and over the Internet, at the Tredegar gift shop, and through an agreement with the Virginia Historical Society. In addition, Kline's society would hawk smaller "resin bronze" miniatures, in an unlimited edition.

AP / Wayne Scarberry

Robert Kline, with miniature statue

"We're going to be out of pocket a considerable sum," Mr. Kline told me. "And we're assuming all the risk, for goodness sake." He had priced the limited-edition miniatures at $875 apiece, the others at $125 (shipping and handling not included). Already, he said, the statue had cost the society $225,000, and sales thus far had only totaled around $40,000.

To the Sons this sounded like profiteering, but the attorney general, the commonwealth's corporation counsel, and the park service all said they found nothing

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improper in the arrangement. Still, simple arithmetic showed that Mr. Kline wouldn't have to unload too many mini-Lincolns to cover his costs. I asked him what he was going to do if he sold so many that he had money left over.

"Oh my, wouldn't that be nice?" he said. "Well, we'll want to withhold some funds for a reserve for future projects—we're always coming up with projects. And then any money beyond that we'll give to the Richmond Peace Education Center, a wonderful group of people here in town. They stand for a lot of things Lincoln stood for. Peace. Understanding others. Their specialty is conflict resolution."

As it happened, I'd already run across the peace education center during my time in Richmond. In the days leading up to the war in Iraq they had taken to the streets downtown in peace demonstrations they called "Women in Black." Stuck in traffic jams, I'd watch through the windshield as the women in black hoisted signs reading "Jail Bush, Not Saddam" and "Disarm U.S., Not Iraq." It seemed odd to fund a pacifist group with money from the sale of little statues representing America's greatest, and fiercest, wartime president, but before I could say anything, Mr. Kline took me over to a shelf.

"And here it is," he said, holding up a bronze miniature. He gave me a high-wattage smile. Lincoln was set to take his place in the pantheon. Santa—Jesus—Chuck Yeager—Elvis—Abe.

4.

The Muddy Boots

No one knows why Lincoln came to Richmond. On April 4, 1865, the correspondent from the *New York Herald*, William Merriam, filed a report with a Richmond dateline.

"No incident of all this drama"—he meant the four years of civil war—"will so attract and fix the attention of the American people and the civilized world as the appearance to-day in the city of Richmond—erased capital of the infernal traitors—of Abraham Lincoln."

Unlike most journalists' predictions, this one proved to be almost accurate. Other memorable episodes from the war are more packed with incident, more gripping in their violence or pathos. In most full-dress histories, however, Lincoln's visit to Richmond stands as the perfect punctuation at the close of the grand narrative, a lingering grace note in the coda of the war, a final eloquent gesture made by the martyr before he leaves the stage. Lincoln in Richmond, wrote James McPherson in *Battle Cry of Freedom*, "produced the most unforgettable scenes of this unforgettable war."

Yet why did he come? In their ten-volume biography of Lincoln, his secretaries Nicolay and Hay described the visit in the grandest terms: "Never in the history of the world did the head of a mighty nation enter the chief city of the insurgents in such humbleness." But even they didn't hazard a guess to explain why Lincoln would risk his own safety, and that of his son, in such an excursion. Mere curiosity is a plausible motive; Lincoln always had a fascination with military maneuvers, and the prospect of seeing the vanquished capital might have proved too much to resist.

The war was in its final hours. He had left Washington a week before to visit Ulysses S. Grant at City Point, Virginia, a river port 30 miles downstream of the Confederate capital, from which vantage he could watch at close range the final progress of federal forces. Dislodged from their defenses at Petersburg, south of Richmond, Robert E. Lee's ragged troops zigzagged their way west, in a final attempt to twist free of the enemy. On Sunday, April 2, Jefferson Davis ordered the government to evacuate the capital. That night detonation squads spread along the waterfront, torching warehouses filled with tobacco and munitions. From across the James River a northerly wind picked up the flames and carried them beyond the warehouses. By daybreak, when Union troops arrived to extinguish the blaze, more than half the business district was gone.

From City Point the next evening, Lincoln telegraphed Edwin Stanton, his secretary of war: "It is certain now that Richmond is in our hands. I think I will go there tomorrow." And to calm the skittish Stanton, who fretted always for Lincoln's safety, he added: "I will take care of myself."

Dozens of armed guards were assigned to make sure that he did. Early Tuesday morning they loaded onto a flotilla that included the *River Queen*, the steamer carrying the presidential party of Lincoln, Tad, and his guide, the naval commander David Porter. They quickly ran into trouble. The Confederates had sown the James with mines and other snares, and one by one the boats ran aground or were abandoned. By the time they reached Richmond, Lincoln and his party had transferred to a scow, with fewer than a dozen marines to row them ashore. They made landfall at Rocketts Landing, on the east end of the charred city, a couple of miles from the Capitol grounds.

For an event so freighted with history, whose symbolic importance was grasped by its witnesses even as it happened, we know for certain remarkably little about Lincoln's time in Richmond. That hasn't kept later generations from speaking about it with great conviction. For Lincoln's admirers the visit is further evidence of their

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man's large-heartedness. For his detractors it demonstrates a conqueror's arrogance.

No photographs were taken of Lincoln in Richmond, and no sketches made from life by the magazine artists who sometimes appeared serendipitously at key moments of the Civil War, and the most complete eyewitness accounts are from the embellishing and unreliable pens of Northern newspapermen, like Merriam, who followed the Union troops into the Confederate capital. Their accounts differ in specifics and vary in plausibility. They disagree even on what time of day Lincoln came ashore. One episode, first put on paper by Admiral Porter in a memoir published 20 years later, is invariably included in histories that mention the visit, in both plain and enhanced versions. Lincoln steps off the barge at Rocketts and is spotted at once by an "aged Negro."

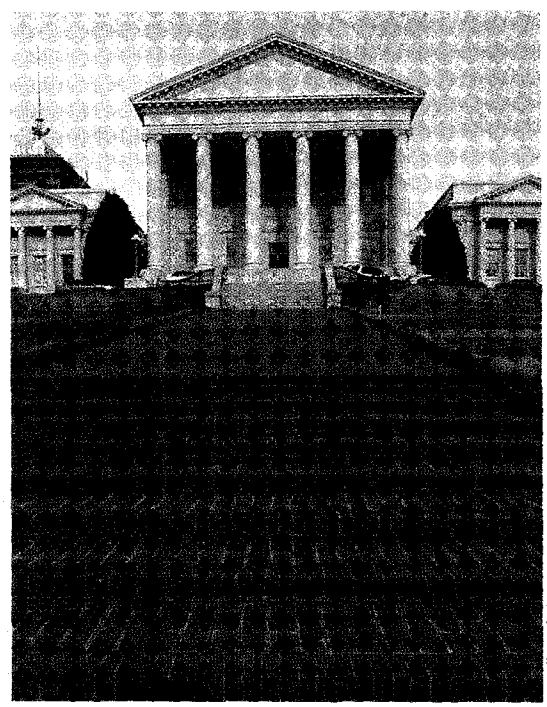
"Bress de Lord, dere is the great messiah!" the old man is quoted as saying, kneeling before his savior, sounding suspiciously like a dispatcher for the Amos and Andy cab company. "He's bin in my heart fo' long years an' he's cum at las' to free his children from bondage! I know dat I am free, for I seen Father Abraham. Glory, Hallelujah!"

Lincoln's response is a mouthful, but it's worth quoting entire, if only to show how quickly the unlikely congeals into fact, when circumstances are right, and then fact into myth.

"Don't kneel to me," Lincoln is said to have said. "That is not right. You must kneel to God only, and thank Him for the liberty you will hereafter enjoy. I am but God's humble instrument; but you may rest assured that as long as I live no one shall put a shackle on your limbs, and you shall have all the rights which God has given to every other citizen of this Republic."

We do not climb out on a limb, historiographically, if we conclude that this incident, recorded with stenographic precision, is baloney. The same can be said of several other episodes reported then and later in the Yankee newspapers. No military escort or even a carriage greeted Lincoln at Rocketts—it's unclear why—and so he set off by foot, with his son in hand, on a two mile trek to the White House of the Confederacy, which now served as Occupation Headquarters but had also, only 36 hours before, been Davis's home. Along the route Lincoln stopped at the notorious Libby Prison, emptied at last of the Union officers who had suffered there for half the war. One correspondent told his readers he'd seen Lincoln linger at the building with "tears pouring down his cheeks," though he must have been the only witness, since no other account mentions this moving detail.

Rising up the hill from the wharves, acre after acre of the city still guttered and smoked. And as Lincoln and his party picked their way through the blackened timbers of the business district, word of his presence spread and a crowd gathered around him—jubilant blacks, mostly, freedmen who were now freshly minted citizens of liberated Richmond. On some facts, all accounts agree. The president's bodyguard—the dozen blue-coated marines from the barge—walked with him in a phalanx, alert to sniperfire or violence from the crowd. There was neither. Only women and children and the elderly were left among the city's white residents, and they stayed shuttered in their houses, watching Lincoln pass from behind parted curtains. When he reached the White House just beyond the hill where the Capitol sits, the president found a crowd of Union officers spilling out from the mansion onto the front porch and into the back garden. Much of their elation was traceable to the wine and spirits cellar they had discovered below the house. Lincoln climbed onto the porch and moved into the cool of the parlor. Ever the teetotaler, he asked for a glass of water.



Lev Nisnevitch

The Capitol

After lunch the president received callers. The most significant was Judge John Campbell, the highest ranking civilian left in Richmond, who presented Lincoln with an offer to call the Virginia legislature back to session, whereupon, Judge Campbell said, it would vote to rejoin the Union. Lincoln liked the idea but nothing ever came of it, since Lee's surrender a few days later made it moot. After his meetings, the president and Tad embarked on a carriage ride around town, then returned to spend the night in a boat at anchor in the James. The next day they sailed down to City Point, and from there to Washington. "He seemed the very personification of supreme satisfac-

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tion," a friend remarked when Lincoln returned to his own White House. Ten days later he belonged to the ages.

Where the carriage took them isn't known, though some accounts record a tour of the Capitol, and Lincoln wandering the chambers through drifts of Confederate currency, now worthless. Two accounts suggest he gave a speech to the freedmen on the Capitol grounds, at the foot of a statue of Washington on horseback, though if he did no one reported what he said.

What we know of this momentous visit is laced with such empty spaces, and into them later generations poured their own views of the great warrior-statesman who had spent a handful of hours in the capital of his vanquished enemy. The visit with Judge Campbell is taken as the primary evidence that Lincoln traveled to Richmond to hasten the end of the war. But it was Campbell, not Lincoln, who requested the meeting, and Lincoln did little to follow through on its implications. "He came as a friend," wrote an early historian, "to alleviate sorrow and suffering—to rebuild what had been destroyed." There's not much evidence for or against this proposition. The wife of George Pickett, the major general who had led his men in the charge at Gettysburg two years before, later wrote that Lincoln interrupted his tour to stop at her townhouse. Lincoln had been a distant acquaintance of Pickett before the war. Mrs. Pickett greeted the president at the door, she said in her account, and Lincoln admired her new baby, even planted it with a kiss, and briefly exchanged pleasantries about friends in common. No one knows whether this is true either.

As a final instance of history's endless refractions, I tried to trace the origin of something Brag Bowling had told me—a colorful quote he repeated for many reporters: "Lincoln didn't come as a healer. He walked into the White House of the Confederacy and plopped down in Jeff Davis's chair and propped his muddy boots up on Jeff Davis's desk and said, 'Hey, we won!' Some healer."

It is a vivid detail that you find often in narratives sympathetic to the South, presented as proof of Lincoln's contempt for his adversaries, a symbol of his desire for their humiliation. Yet no eyewitness account mentions Davis's chair, or Lincoln's sitting in it. The detail was first recorded by someone who wasn't there: the humorist David Locke, who wrote a satirical version of Lincoln's visit in the voice of his character Petroleum V. Nasby. The chronicles of Nasby were published in Republican newspapers throughout the North. They were also, as it happens, Abraham Lincoln's favorite reading. In Locke's columns Nasby is a Southern sympathizer and all-purpose figure of fun; Locke's audience took Nasby's every pronouncement ironically, as a mockery of the rebels.

After newspapers boomed word of the president's visit to Richmond, Locke wrote an account in which his character was appalled by the news. "Lincoln rides into Richmond!" Nasby sputtered in illiterate outrage. "A Illinois rail-splitter, a buffoon, a ape, a goriller, a smutty-joker, sets himself down in President Davis's cheer!"

Though the fact was often repeated in subsequent accounts, this is the only contemporaneous mention of Lincoln's sitting in Davis's chair. It was a fancy detail, a bit of comic invention, meant to mock the Lincoln haters. That it's now used by them to buttress their case for Lincoln's arrogance proves that the joke is still on them—but not only on them.

5.

Among the Lincoln Haters

"Victors write the history," Brag Bowling was telling me, "and when you've got a dumbed-down country like we do now, it's not so hard to make this man appear to be something he clearly wasn't. But we're going to start to correct the record right here, right now."

We were standing in the lobby of the John Marshall Hotel on a Saturday morning a few days after my visit with Mr. Kline, greeting guests as they arrived for the "Lincoln Reconsidered" conference. The Marshall was put up not long after World War One, and it's still the tallest building in Richmond's old downtown, though of course there's not much competition. Within days of the conflagration in April 1865, downtown was on the mend, and before too long terraced rows of shops and townhouses were spreading across the hilltops above the James. Recent decades have been unkind, however, and the Marshall stands now at the edge of a vast acreage of empty storefronts and parking lots, enlivened here and there by random glimmers of commercial life—a hot dog stand, a shoe repair shop, a check cashing service. Especially on a Saturday morning, downtown gives off a defeated air. If someone decided to burn it down again I don't think anybody would mind.

The Marshall struggles to keep business up. A hardy band of civic-minded entrepreneurs undertook a bottom-to-top renovation a few years ago, working their way up, story by story, and from what I could see, snooping around, they had decided to catch their breath after the third or fourth floor. Our Lincoln conference took place on the mezzanine, in the old ballroom, site of generations of Richmond cotillions and comings-out. It had been freshly painted in a cheerless taupe, and the hotel itself

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was weirdly quiet. The conference was its only activity. Bowling told me that roughly 300 people had registered for the conference, drawn from more than a dozen states, and none seemed to mind the drowsy, languid air of the setting. For even with modernity's depredations downtown Richmond is hallowed ground, rich beyond price with associations from the sacred past. Sitting in the Marshall we were only two blocks from Robert E. Lee's townhouse, where Mrs. Lee had paced the floor in worry over her absent husband and sons, and eight blocks from the White House of the Confederacy, where Lincoln had met with Judge Campbell, and three blocks from the Capitol, where Davis had struggled in vain to staunch his country's bleeding, and just around the corner from the Presbyterian church where Stonewall Jackson himself had once served as an elder, before his martyrdom at Chancellorsville.

Folding tables had been set out in the lobby, a long one for registration, many others covered in white linen and heaped with stuff for sale. One booklet ("Arm Yourself with the Truth") had conveniently assembled in a single, at-the-ready volume all of Lincoln's least attractive remarks on the subject of race, such as his outburst in the Lincoln-Douglas debates: "Negro equality, fudge!"—a comment famous among the Sons and their compatriots, less frequently quoted elsewhere. Next to this stack was a poster for another Lincoln book: "You think our problems began in the Sixties? You're right: The 1860s!" Said another poster: "What if everything you knew about Lincoln were false?"

Lev Nisnevitch

Robert E. Lee

The long arm of multiculturalism had extended its reach even into Confederate ranks; I thumbed through such ethnocentric volumes as *The Irish in the Army of Northern Virginia* and *The Jewish Confederates*. A man in a dark suit, grinning mysteriously, handed me a card that read: "Who Killed James Forrestal?" Order forms were available for anyone who might want to buy a videotape of the day's conference: "To change the minds of those filled with misinformation," read the come-on, "you must be prepared with the truth. Preparation requires study and repetitive ingestion of the facts as presented today."

There were stacks of rare videos and audio tapes. "*The Real Lincoln* Home Study Program" had been designed for home schoolers and college students. "You read a chapter of Dr. DiLorenzo's groundbreaking book," the man at the booth said, "then you watch this video in which Dr. DiLorenzo goes over the key points and expands his discussion in new and surprising ways. When you're done with this aspect, you turn to our *Real Lincoln* home workbook." He ran his hand over a cream-colored folder from which Lincoln's face stared out, looking unhappy. "The workbook is where you test and hone your knowledge, with questions prepared especially for that purpose," the man went on. "Then you return to the book, then the video lecture, and back to the workbook. And so on. It's a system," he said, "and we do grant discounts for multiple orders."

Round tables filled the ballroom. At each seat was a pad of paper and a pen, for note-taking. These got heavy use as the day wore on. The conference-goers were a studious, earnest group, hungry for information. In certain respects, people who really, really hate Abraham Lincoln get a bad rap. The general view of them—when they are acknowledged at all—is of grizzled hillbillies, a few steps out from the hills and hollers, chewing straw and chain-smoking 'boro Reds. This is inaccurate, in the main. The conference-goers gathered at the Marshall were almost exclusively male, of course, and white, but with their affable demeanor and dress—the suburban weekender's uniform of expensive sneakers,

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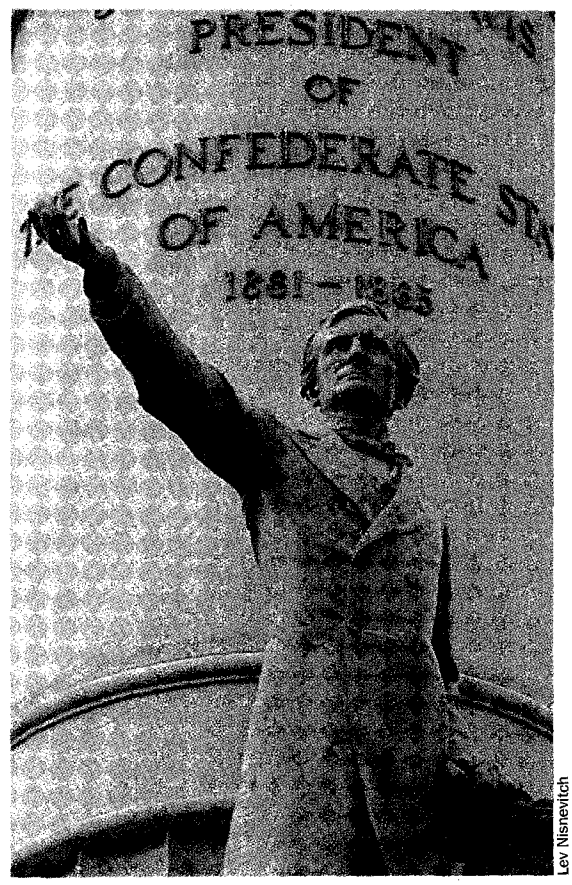
pastel polo shirts stretched smooth across the belly, khaki trousers pleated in front and cut generously at the rear—they could have been airlifted from the clubhouse of any community golf course in America.

Together they bowed their heads when, only a few minutes behind schedule, an Anglican priest rose to give the invocation. "We ask your aid, oh Heavenly Father," he said, in a buttery voice, "in prevailing over the liberal historians who would distort our history and destroy our heritage." Then Bowling introduced himself. He explained to the audience, as he had to me, how appalled he'd been to learn of the Lincoln statue, and how it had inspired him to organize the conference. "So I turned to Dr. DiLorenzo and asked for his help in taking an objective look at Abraham Lincoln," he said. "In the face of so many facts, we cannot allow this myth to continue."

Bowling's remarks were followed, unexpectedly, by a musical interlude, the national debut of a music video made just a week before, as a public protest against Lincoln's uninvited return to the capital of the Confederacy. "Goin' Back to Richmond" is a lament in a minor key, written and recorded by a man from Ft. Myers, Florida, named Robert Lloyd. The lights came down and in the front of the ballroom a TV screen brightened to a silver glow. From the speakers came Lloyd's baritone, trembling with anger and regret. "I hear the voice of Jackson," Lloyd sang, "calling out my name / 'Don't let ole Dixie writhe in shame / Don't let our children go on wonderin' / Did their fathers die in vain?'"



Lev Nisnevitch

Jefferson Davis

The video was filmed in sepia tones, with a herky-jerky handheld camera, the better to suggest antiquity. There were no slithery dancers in it, as in other music videos, no preening guitar players; just old photos of Richmond before and after the fire, along with dour images of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and John C. Calhoun. These bled into one another, then faded in and out, in the tempo of a dirge. Occasionally footage of Civil War reenactors filled the screen. They fired their longguns, scampered in mock panic across open fields, and pretended to get shot, crumpling horribly before the camera and rolling their eyes heavenward.

"I'll join hands with my brothers," Lloyd continued, "And guard this precious land / To you, Mr. Lincoln, we take our stand / You're still not welcome, now or ever / At least to this loyal Southern man."

When it was over, the man sitting next to me shook his head, much moved, and said, "Whoa." His first name was Robert. He asked that I not use his last name, because he works for the federal government in Washington. "There's a lot of political correctness up there," he said. "They don't need to know about my interest in Mr. Lincoln."

He was a small man and very friendly, with thinning, mouse-colored hair and a neatly trimmed mustache and a quick, energetic manner. Before long it became clear that he, like every other Son I've spoken to, had read deeply, if not widely, in the nearly limitless literature of the Civil War and its aftermath. During breaks in the conference Robert explained some of what he'd most recently learned. "Objective historians," he told me, now realized that racism had played a much smaller role in Southern history than previously thought.

"You know why Southern legislators enacted Jim Crow laws after the war?" he asked.

I said I could guess.

"Well," he said with a friendly smile, "you'd be wrong."

Southerners accepted Jim Crow only with the greatest reluctance, he told me. Segregation was a response to demands from Northern businessmen following the Civil War.

"The South desperately needed their commerce," Robert explained, "but the Yankees wouldn't do any business down here unless the African Americans were kept segregated. The Yankees wouldn't have anything to do with the black man. And they call the Southerners racist?"

He sat back and folded his arms, case closed. Lincoln haters are touchy on the subject of race; most of them, in

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my experience, don't want their Abephobia tied in any way to negrophobia, and in fact they are delighted, for this reason and for reasons of general perversity, to confound expectations by condemning Lincoln as a racist. In the same way, it is important for them to assert that the war Lincoln won was not about slavery. During another break, Robert grabbed a fresh piece of notepaper and diagrammed an econometric model that he had lately unearthed from an academic journal of political economy. It demonstrated, he told me, an ironclad law of social relations: When disparities in income and productivity levels between one region of a nation and another region grow too great, the inequality becomes unsustainable, and the result, as night follows day, is civil war.

"It's happened time and again throughout world history, to small countries and big countries and young countries and old countries," he said. Just such a disequilibrium had developed in the United States in the 1850s. He tapped the diagram with the extrasharp point of his pencil. "Right here is the cause of your War Between the States."

I don't know how many of the conference-goers would have agreed with Robert on the specifics, but the thrust of his argument—that the war was about brute economic arrangements and the allocation of political spoils—is a common theme among his fellows; so common indeed that it should lay to rest another misconception about the Lincoln haters—that they are romantics, pie-eyed with nostalgia for the lost agrarian South. It's true that under the gruff exterior of many a Son beats a heart softened by imagined memories of moonbeams and magnolias; but beneath that tearful, nostalgic heart you will find another, even gruffer interior. The despisers see themselves as hard-headed realists, proud to have shaken off the self-serving myths of American history. It is the rest of the country that has succumbed to sentimental delusions, specifically the syrupy legend of Father Abraham, kindly hero to the downtrodden, emancipator of the enslaved. "All the Father Abraham stuff—it's a fraud," Robert told me. "You know who's a big Lincoln buff? Mario Cuomo. All the left-wingers are. Tells you all you need to know."

The theme of fraudulence, of a comprehensive scam spanning decades, deluding even most contemporary southerners, is the theme of *The Real Lincoln*, and Thomas DiLorenzo's clean, uncomplicated articulation of it has ensured his place at the head of what the Lincoln haters call "our movement." *The Real Lincoln* was one of the top-selling selections of the Conservative Book Club over the last ten years—which is more impressive than it sounds, since this club does know how to move units. A professor at Loyola College in Maryland, DiLorenzo is an economist by training and a libertarian by inclination.

"I'd read a lot of economic history, of course, and I started to read a lot about Lincoln as sort of a hobby," he told me. "And it became clear to me how deeply Lincoln was involved in the Whig economic program of the early 19th century. The agenda was to centralize political and economic power—government subsidies for big business like the railroads and banks, tariffs for favored industries, what we call 'corporate welfare' today. It was really all Lincoln cared about. It's what he built his political career around. He was a railroad lawyer, a rich one. Certainly he wasn't interested in slavery. By his own admission, he didn't even make it an issue till 1854."

The more DiLorenzo learned about Lincoln—and discovered, for example, that Lincoln was never an abolitionist, and that he was skeptical of enfranchising freed slaves, and that he had in fact advocated colonization of blacks to Central America or to the remotest territories of the American Southwest—the more he realized "there's this huge con job at the heart of our history."

"This man was not the saint I was taught about when I was going to public school in western Pennsylvania," he said. "And it started to dawn on me, the whole Whig platform, all these centralized policies that they hadn't been able to implement by democratic means in the first 70 years of our history—they were all implemented within the first six months of the war.

"And then, once the war began, it was about consolidating and using that power. Lincoln shut down hundreds of newspapers that dared to criticize him. He suspended habeas corpus. He had at least 18,000 Americans—the estimates vary—he had them thrown into jail on the flimsiest pretexts, or with no pretext at all."

DiLorenzo's book isn't original, but it usefully collects and paraphrases a century's worth of anti-Lincoln arguments in a brief, up-to-date volume. Its 10 chapters carry such titles as "Lincoln's Opposition to Racial Equality," "Was Lincoln a Dictator?" and "The Great Centralizer: Lincoln's Economic Legacy." His method of gathering evidence is highly selective; in fact, to tell the truth, the book is a bit of a hatchet job. Every datum is meticulously extracted from its context and then positioned to reflect as poorly on Lincoln as possible. Radical abolitionists, southern racists, political rivals—all are accepted as authoritative sources on Lincoln, so long as their comments are sufficiently hostile; comments the same men may have made to the contrary, or in mitigation, go unmentioned. When Lincoln himself is quoted disparaging blacks, as in the Lincoln-Douglas debate in Charleston, Illinois, DiLorenzo takes him at his word; Lincoln's comments in the same debate in favor of black equality, or

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against slavery, DiLorenzo dismisses as cynical posturing.

The Lincoln who emerges from this carefully assembled collage is a figure of almost unimaginable depravity. And while the portrait lacks the richness and complexity of good history it is undoubtedly compelling, as grotesques often are. Even for DiLorenzo's philosophical allies, however, the book's weaknesses are hard to ignore. Not long after its publication, Richard M. Gamble, a historian at Palm Beach Atlantic University, wrote a blistering notice in the *Independent Review*, a libertarian journal written, edited, and read by Lincoln skeptics. Calling DiLorenzo "an author of evident courage and ability," Gamble went on to list, in the course of a few paragraphs, more than 20 errors of fact and citation in the book. "Sad to say," Gamble wrote, "this catalog of errors is only a sampling. . . . As it stands, *The Real Lincoln* is a travesty of historical method and documentation: exasperating, maddening, and deeply disappointing." And these are his friends.

His friends in Richmond were kinder. In the ballroom, during breaks, admirers formed queues to grab a word with him. "One of the purposes of a conference like this," he said, "is to explain how we got to where we are today." The audience was eager to learn about the past not for the past's sake, but to better understand what was happening to them and the country today. For a paid-up Lincoln despiser, history is a living thing. And they were not disappointed. The list of horribles rooted in the 1860s was very long: urbanization and the death of agrarian communities, the income tax, the erosion of local authority in the face of federal power, the dissolution of family ties, affirmative action—these are for starters. Donald Livingston, a professor of philosophy at Emory University and a well-known scholar in the work of David Hume, gave a dazzling presentation tracing Lincoln's corrosive effects through our history. "Americans are morally deficient for never having considered the evil of launching the bloodiest war of the 19th century merely to preserve Northern political and economic domination of the continent," he said. "That failure has kept us from moral and political maturity."

Clyde Wilson, another star of the movement and a professor of history at the University of South Carolina, worked in an ad hominem mode. National myths, said Wilson, are a necessary part of history and its instruction. When Parson Weems published his fairy tale about George Washington and the cherry tree, he was illustrating a truth for the consumption of children—that Washington's life was motivated by a commitment to telling the truth. "But the Lincoln myth," Wilson said, "fails to make a solid connection with what really happened, to draw a connection between what he did and what his supporters say he did."

The real story of Lincoln's life, Wilson said, was "shabby and tawdry." The illegitimate son of a servant girl and a shiftless, no-account father whom he despised, Lincoln grew up to be a terrible father himself, spoiling his children and ignoring their mother. Some evidence—Mary Todd's accelerating mental deterioration, for example—suggested he might have given his wife syphilis. He had no intellectual interests other than winning legal cases and amassing personal wealth. He sought office primarily to reward political cronies and Big Business clients. Clearly he had a messiah complex, but he was a messiah with no purpose beyond his own aggrandizement; he told smutty jokes. When at last he died, one of his pallbearers bragged that no blacks or Jews were allowed at his funeral. By contrast, it's just a simple fact that at the funerals of the Confederacy's vice president, Alexander Stephens, and of the great Southern general Nathan Bedford Forrest, hundreds of blacks were welcomed . . .

The ventilation in the ballroom was very poor. At lunchtime sandwiches were laid out for the guests in an adjoining meeting room. Politely as I could I turned aside Robert's invitation to eat with him and went out to get some air. Downtown was deserted. I walked several blocks past empty storefronts looking for someplace to eat. After a while I stumbled on an indoor food court, tucked next to the new convention center, recently opened on the outskirts of downtown.

That Saturday, I quickly discovered, the convention center was playing host to the annual meeting of the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education. It's a teachers' union, and the members were noisily queuing up at Sbarro's Pizza, Subway, TCBY Yogurt, Taco Bell, Great Steak & Potato Company—America's great groaning board of starch, sugar, fat, and salt. Looking at them bustling from one counter to the other you might have thought they'd stepped out of a Benetton ad. Nearly all of them were women, and they formed a near-perfect racial mix, a demographer's dream, an ethnic rainbow, a gorgeous mosaic—whatever the going metaphor is. Everyone wore a name badge decorated with tiny handprints and silhouettes of somersaulting toddlers. Their lunchhour had followed a morning of breakout sessions, workshops, and seminars, with titles like "Banning Superhero Play: Fiddlesticks or Chopsticks," and "Being a Guide by the Side, Not a Sage on the Stage." They looked very busy and very happy.

I got a sandwich from Subway and took a seat at one of

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the round metal tables. Normally I don't like crowds and noise but for the moment I didn't mind. Brilliant sunshine flooded into the food court through a skylight far overhead. Rainbow arcs of balloons had been set out, left to sway in the breeze from the air conditioning vents, lending color to the commotion. The tables filled up quickly, and two women asked if they could join me. They told me they were "educators," which is, of course, the new word for "teachers." I said I was in Richmond writing an article about history, and the odd ways Americans react to it and use it, and they did their best to look interested.

"History!" one of them said. "Isn't that fascinating!"

Her friend nodded and chewed her slice of pizza thoughtfully. "History can be such a learning experience," she said.

We had a nice chat. It was only with some trouble that I forced myself to get up and walk back to the Marshall, and not merely because the sole of my sneaker was stuck in a puddle of old Dr. Pepper.

I didn't want to go back because I was thinking, "Those guys say they don't like Lincoln, and they don't, but this is what they really hate, this right here. The country turned into something they don't like, and they think Lincoln's responsible, and they'll never forgive him for it."

Library of Congress

"Mother Arsenal of the South": Tredegar Iron Works, April 1865

6.

Jesse Jackson's Revenge

"I'll tell you what," Brag Bowling said later that afternoon, as we stood in the lobby of the John Marshall, watching the conference empty out. "You go down the hill there, down to Tredegar, you'll see exactly what we're talking about. Right now they're down there at the visitor center patting themselves on the back for demonizing the Confederate soldier."

What's left of the Tredegar Iron Works, "Mother Arsenal of the South," sits in a park on the banks of the James, at the foot of downtown, alongside a railroad trestle built long ago to carry numberless tons of ordnance from Tredegar to all points of the Confederacy. Trains still rumble by several times a day, hauling less spectacular cargo. The site chosen for the Lincoln statue lies almost in the trestle's shadow, at the entrance to the National Battlefield Park Civil War Visitor Center, which is housed in one of a handful of mill buildings to have survived since the foundry's shuttering in 1957.

Cynthia MacLeod, supervisor of the park, showed me around. The works has been prettified in the park service manner. The brick buildings, long since swept clean of their rusting debris, have been sand-blasted to a rosy brilliance, their windows weatherized, the trim painted a creamy white, and where the beams are exposed they've been lacquered till they gleam. The lawns are emerald green and neatly trimmed. As caretaker of our historical resources, the National Park Service is in the business of presenting a tidy past, tricked out as attractively as possible in the ruthless competition for the tourist dollar. Only here and there can you see, as if it were an oversight, some relic suggesting genuine decrepitude and ancient use. There's an old sluice gate with a creaky wooden wheel that's set spinning every once in a while, ceremonially. Back beyond the buildings are the tumbledown brick ruins of a water channel, safely fenced off from the tourists, who might hurt themselves if left free to wander near.

I asked MacLeod whether she was surprised by the volume and vehemence of the objections to the Lincoln statue. "Not really," she said. She's a mild, imperturbable woman, and seemed quite resolute. "This is an ongoing thing. Something like this is happening lots of places."

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For the park service, the Lincoln imbroglio was merely a tributary of a much larger, more comprehensive argument about how to present the Civil War to its visitors. Almost every significant battlefield from the war is in park service custody, along with many other sites, like Tredegar, that are dear to the heart of a buff.

It is a delicate responsibility. For most of its history the park service has reflected an unspoken agreement about the war that has held since the end of Reconstruction. In this social compact the gallantry of the fighting men of both sides was universally stipulated to, while touchier questions about the war's origin and larger meaning were passed over or left to the disputations of historians and hobbyists.

"There was an implicit pact to let bygones be bygones," says Harold Holzer, a Lincoln historian who helped bring the Lincoln statue to Richmond. "Both sides agreed not to interfere in one another's memories." Was the war a successful struggle against slavery or a futile defense of state sovereignty and limited government? Better to dwell on the human cost, which all could agree was more than the country should ever have borne. Carl Sandburg, in his biography of Lincoln, tells of a Kentucky father who lost two sons in the war, one fighting for the South, the other for the North. He buried them together. Over their graves he placed a marble slab incised with the words: "God knows which was right."

"When Reconstruction came to an end the movement toward reconciliation commenced," Allen Sullivant, the Sons' chief of heritage defense, wrote recently. "The North chose to be magnanimous in victory, content with their success in maintaining the Union. Without their objection, the citizens of the South were able to venerate and remember the heroic actions of their men-at-arms. . . . With the establishment of the national battlefield parks system, parks chose to present the events which took place on those hallowed grounds in a military context which honored the valor of both sides and did not advance (or denigrate) the political or social position of either."

The veneration of Lincoln, in North and South, was part of the deal, too. But the questions about the war are too large to be forever answered with a sentimental shrug or an averted gaze. Certainly the consensus could not withstand the withering scrutiny of people for whom the particulars of history are too vital to be glossed over. The social compact of a century began to crack 40 years ago, when the centenary celebrations of the war coincided with the civil rights movement, and the breakdown has only accelerated since. A landmark was reached in 1999, when Congress approved a bill, introduced by Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., requiring the park service "to encourage Civil War battle sites to recognize and include in all their public displays . . . the unique role that the institution of slavery played in causing the Civil War."

MacLeod, not surprisingly, paraphrases the requirement more delicately: "Congress encouraged us to be more inclusive in our presentation of the causes of the war."

And Brag Bowling, also not surprisingly, puts it less delicately: "What we've got now, for the first time in history, is an agency of the federal government decreeing that this one factor, slavery, was the sole, unique cause of the war. The whole point is to make the Confederates look like the bad guys. And if you have another opinion—like, the war had several important causes? You're out of luck."

Exhibits at Tredegar are exemplary of the park service's new method for presenting the war to interested (and more to the point, not-so-interested) visitors. Service historians and curators have imbibed deeply of "social history," valuing the everyday experience of ordinary people at the expense of the heroic, the martial, or the exciting. Though the Richmond park is one of the world's largest collections of battlefields—an archipelago of well-preserved woods and fields ranged around an 80-mile circuit—there is remarkably little in the exhibits about combat. The displays are interesting almost despite themselves: homey artifacts like pipes and playing cards, old bottles and cakes of soap, set against panels crowded with clouds of explanatory text. The tone of the text isn't didactic, certainly not propagandistic. But it is eerily mild. On the introductory placard a visitor reads: "The Confederacy mounted an impressive defense of Richmond and Virginia in the face of enormous obstacles. Always outnumbered, and frequently suffering from shortages of material goods, they nonetheless maintained enviable morale."

"We're trying to expand the interpretation beyond the usual who-won, who-lost, who-shot-whom interpretation," MacLeod told me, walking the broad-plank floor of the old foundry. "We want the human connections, the letters home, the voices of real people."

She meant "voices" literally. They're inescapable, floating out from miniature speakers skillfully hidden from view. At every point in the exhibit you hear, or half-hear, the voices of actors reading old letters and diaries, playing again and again on a tape loop. It's as though a handful of your fellow tourists have finally gone mad and are following you around, repeating themselves endlessly and refusing to shut up. Creepier still, from beneath the murmured words drift up those doleful tunes, played on creaky violins and pitiful flutes—those manic-depressive melodies that the documentarian Ken Burns, through his

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PBS TV shows, has now made the official soundtrack of American history.

Despite what Brag Bowling said, no one is demonized at Tredegar. The center's displays are fastidiously inoffensive—history from which the drama has been pressed out, history planed down and smoothed over, made to keep the attention, if at all possible, of people who really don't care much for history. Only someone for whom history is urgent and personal, a matter of the living present as well as the long ago, will find the exhibits gimmicky and shallow and, in a way hard to explain, disrespectful.

Back outside the foundry, MacLeod showed me where the statue would be placed two weeks later. The statue itself hadn't yet arrived, but already workmen were paving a little plaza with old stones dug from a nearby canal. It was to sit at ground level, and behind it, MacLeod said, a marble half-wall would curve in a semicircle, bearing the phrase from Lincoln's Second Inaugural: "To Bind Up the Nation's Wounds."

"That, for me, conveys the whole idea," MacLeod said. "It's about healing. How could anyone object to healing?"

Lev Nisnevitch

Stonewall Jackson

7.

On the Avenue

The unveiling was set for April 5, a Saturday. I drove back down to Richmond the day before to meet up with David Leak, a Son who had attended the Lincoln conference at the Marshall. He had agreed to show me around town—"to see some of the important sights," he said—and help me kill time before the ceremonies began Saturday morning.

Leak is in his late fifties, stout and balding, a banjo-picker by trade. This sunny afternoon he was dressed casually, as he usually is, in baggy khakis, a purple polo shirt, and, both as a sporty touch and a shield from the sun, a wide-brimmed Panama hat. I met him outside the house he shares with his mother. He lives in what Richmonders call the Fan, a picturesque district of Victorian row houses, all red brick with white trim, set along wide boulevards that angle out from downtown and run westward for 30 blocks or more. Each house has a columned front porch and a small square of lawn edged in boxwood. The dogwood and azaleas were in full bloom.

I complimented him on the neighborhood.

"Charmin', isn't it?" he said. Leak is native to the capital, and his accent is deep and rich. "It's a wonder"—*a wondah*—"it's been preserved as well as it has. But Richmond is that way. A lot of the big things change, a lot of the little ones never do. At least to the naked eye."

The first stop on our tour was the Capitol grounds—notable for its statuary, just as the guidebooks say. The magnificent equestrian statue of Washington, where Lincoln may or may not have made his lost address to the freedmen, still towers over the lawn where it drops away toward the river. Leak nodded at it, then pointed me farther along the Capitol driveway, to a statue of Stonewall Jackson, which sits in a prominent position—right next to a statue of his doctor.

I was saying, "They built a statue of Stonewall Jackson's doctor?" when Leak had me stop the car.

"You see old Stonewall standing there," he said. "Very impressive, isn't he? Well, here's the plan. They're gonna start on a renovation of this place real soon. Redo everything, make it good as new. However, there will be a shortage of toilet facilities for those visiting the Capitol. So honest to God, they've announced they're going to line the portapotties up right along here in front of this statue so no young innocent will have to be exposed to the horrible sight of Stonewall Jackson. Now whole busloads of schoolchildren will be able to tour their state Capitol and take a piss on the hero of Chancellorsville, all in the same day."

We drove back through old downtown, past doorways heaped in trash. "When I was a boy people would come from all over to shop here," Leak said. "Department

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stores, theaters, candy shops, haberdashers. Look at it now. Anyone who tries to stand up for tradition, for the past, when we do that, they call us 'alienated.' Well, yes, I guess I am alienated from this."

As we drove along, Leak quoted Tocqueville on "democratic consensus," Allen Tate on the character of the southern imagination, and the art critic Robert Hughes on the value of representational, as opposed to abstract, art. Everything he said was interesting, but his observations were interspersed in a long patter of complaint. I saw before too long he was taking me on a grievance tour—perhaps the only way he could see his hometown, now that it had suffered so many indignities.

He told me he had never been politically inclined until 10 years ago or so. In 1993, the City Council unilaterally decided to place a statue of the tennis star Arthur Ashe, a Richmond native, on Monument Avenue, the miles-long boulevard dotted with memorial statues of Confederate heroes. Monument Avenue is Via Dolorosa for southern nostalgics.

"It was the gratuitousness of it that bothered me," he said. "There was just no call for it. And then they tried to stop a mural of Robert E. Lee from going up down by the river. They were getting up some kind of tourist destination down there, a river walk, and Lee's was just one portrait in a gallery—a perfectly politically correct gallery of women, blacks, liberals, everyone else. You could have Frederick Douglass. Fine. They had Lincoln, of course. Got to have Lincoln. But not Lee. Oh no. Couldn't have Lee."

Lev Nisnevitch

Arthur Ashe on Monument Avenue

Inspired and repulsed, Leak began writing letters to the editor, attended rallies, and eventually joined the Sons in their long-running guerrilla war with the city establishment. "The powers that control the city, they cannot stand diversity," he said. "They say they love it, but really they cannot tolerate it. They want everyone to live like them, think like them, talk like them, honor their heroes, honor their values. Meanwhile they do everything they can to eliminate ours."

He said the city of his childhood had ceased to exist a generation ago. "The newspaper is run by Yankees. The businessmen are spineless. Cultural Marxists control all the major institutions. They're very cosmopolitan, these people. They have no sense of being rooted in a single place—to them Richmond is just this town they've moved to. They've been everywhere, and they're from nowhere."

He told me he'd seen a sign from the city's Valentine Richmond History Center, sponsoring a "Lincoln Walk."

"Here you've got the oldest, most revered museum in this city. They're just falling all over themselves to commemorate the great man's visit. They want the citizens of Richmond to follow in the footsteps of the American Caesar, to ooh and aah: Oh, he walked here! Oh, he stopped there! How can they honor a man who did everything in his power to destroy them? I'll tell you how. They've taught southerners to hate their history. And after the history is gone, after their respect for their ancestors is gone, there's nothing to replace it with."

He pointed me down North Boulevard, another grand thoroughfare, past Battle Abbey, the bunker-like headquarters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. "You'd think they'd have some kind of Confederate flag flying, wouldn't you? You see a Confederate flag?"

I scanned the marble face of the building and its complicated foliage. I didn't see a flag.

"Look close. It's there."

I gave up.

"Drive around here," he said, and I pulled the car up at an odd angle where we could peer into a copse of trees—and sure enough, tucked behind a towering pine that almost precisely blocked it from the street was a Con-

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federate battle flag, hanging limp from a gold-trim pole. "They moved the flagpole a while back," Leak said. "Had to get it out of public view! Can't expose the children! Even at the headquarters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy."

We drove further down, past the Virginia Historical Society, where the building's original inscription, "Confederate Memorial Institute," has been covered over by a huge banner, and then through Hollywood Cemetery, where more than 10,000 Confederate soldiers are buried, and where, at Jefferson Davis's grave, the Sons were planning to hold a counter-demonstration against the Lincoln statue the next day. Leak said he wouldn't be at the counter-demonstration, but planned to be at Tredegar to protest the unveiling as it happened. "Got a bunch of signs being printed up at Kinko's even as we're standing here talking," he said.

On our way back to the Fan, we drove the length of Monument Avenue again, past Stuart, Lee, Jackson, and the other heroes, so Leak could show me the statue of Arthur Ashe. When the city council first approved the statue, a year after Ashe's death in 1989, civic groups from all over the city vied to have it placed in their neighborhoods. The council voted to place it on the avenue instead, notwithstanding, or rather because of, the odd juxtaposition—just a few hundred yards down the street from Jefferson Davis, who never in his life would have given a thought to Arthur Ashe or his ancestors, unless he'd been putting in a bid.

The City Council's highhanded decision, and the energetic objections to it, made news around the world, drawing attention to Richmond as a place "where the Civil War was still being fought." With their marches and paid advertisements, the Sons campaigned loudly against the city fathers, in a prototype of the campaign they now waged against the Lincoln statue.

"Of course, we lost in the end," Leak said. "They won. They always do."

We looked up at the statue as cars circled by. Amid a clutch of crouching children, Ashe stands knobby-kneed, in short pants and ankle socks. He holds both hands aloft, raising his racquet high in the air as though he's trying to keep it away from the brats at his feet.

The statue looked puny and absurd.

"It's a joke," Leak said.

"It makes the whole avenue seem like a postmodern installation," I agreed. "'Five Generals and a Tennis Player.'"

In the car I said: "You have to admit Ashe is a great local hero. He deserves a statue, right?"

"That is an issue on which I have no strong views one way or the other," Leak said. "There are dozens of places where a thing like that would have been suitable. The important thing is, by putting the statue here, on the avenue, they realized they could trivialize the things we cherish and get away with it. They could rub our noses in it and nobody could be powerful enough to stop them. So of course it was just the beginning."

For our final stop, Leak had me pull over to the far lane of another traffic circle, in the center of which General Lee sat impossibly high and erect on his mount, Traveler. We got out and Leak removed his hat. "Robert E. Lee is of course the beau ideal of Southern manhood," he said, "a gentleman whose character was as close to perfection as Southerners have dared imagine."

I said, lamely, that Lee did indeed seem like a great man.

"You need to understand one thing about Robert E. Lee," Leak said. "And this one thing may help you understand other things. Lee inherited slaves from his wife's father. He freed them at once. Slavery was a sin against God, he said.

"And then—*then*—when his country, Virginia, was invaded by Yankees, he did not hesitate to take up arms to defend her. They can say what they want. But when this man took the field he was not fighting for slavery.

"When they brought the statue to Richmond, there were ceremonies to mark its progress as they pulled it through the streets. Grown men wept as it passed. *They wept.* It's not so hard to understand, is it? The people who paid for these beautiful statues, who built them and honored them and maintained them, they believed in something. You may like it, you may not like it—but they believed in it.

"What do people believe in now? Nothing. Commerce. Power. Money. Winning at whatever cost.

"When they put that statue in tomorrow, down at Tredegar, with the mayor and the businessmen there, and the governor probably, when they put in that glorious, expensive statue to Father Abraham, they will have won again, right? They always win. Fine. Winning is what they care about.

"But you think anyone's going to weep?"

8.

Down Here Among the People

We're a forward-looking country. What could be less American than dwelling on the past? So it is fitting that when modern Americans dwell on Lincoln—who is, after all, the inventor of modern America—we botch the job. Those who hate him turn him into a monster out of all proportion. Those who love him turn him into a sentimental old poop.

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The Richmond City Council had declared April 5, 2003, "Lincoln in Richmond Day," and an hour after dawn the day was still dark, with slate-gray thunderheads rolling up from Petersburg in a line along the river. But the downpour never came. By late afternoon, when the shroud was tugged off the statue at the visitor center, the sun had splintered through and Tredegar was bathed in golden light. Hundreds of onlookers cheered, the bronze of the statue glowed, and the mayor and Mr. Kline and the park service people beamed.

Many of them had spent their morning at a "Lincoln in Richmond" symposium, held a couple miles away at the headquarters of the Virginia Historical Society—the same building where, Leak had told me, the word "Confederate" had been covered up from embarrassment. In keeping with the interlocking fiduciary opportunities that so appalled the Sons, the society was hawking miniatures of the Lincoln statue to its members, splitting the money with Mr. Kline and his nonprofit U.S. Historical Society. The symposium was thrown together in haste, as the city establishment's rebuttal to the "Lincoln Reconsidered" conference, and like the Sons, the society had had to reach far beyond Richmond for its panel of Lincoln experts.

They shared a pedigree common to the breed nowadays; indeed, it would have been difficult to bring together a panel of Lincoln obsessives more perfectly opposite to the group assembled by Brag Bowling at the John Marshall Hotel. Harold Holzer, a specialist in Lincolniana from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, used to write speeches for Mario Cuomo. William Lee Miller, an ethics professor from the University of Virginia, was a speechwriter for Adlai Stevenson and later worked for Lyndon Johnson. The third panelist, Ronald C. White, is dean of the San Francisco Theological Seminary, which is a self-explanatory job title.

It's no surprise, then, that the Lincoln who emerged from their discussion was a cross between Adlai Stevenson and Mario Cuomo, if both had gone to San Francisco Theological Seminary. Professor Miller noted how "unmoralistic" Lincoln was, a specialist in self-criticism who never felt the need, despite constant provocation, to be "judgmental." White, for his part, said the Richmond statue improved on Daniel Chester French's heroic, awe-inspiring statue of Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial. "We're in a new era," White said. "The new statue gives us a mild, contemplative Lincoln, in marked contrast to French. Today there's a different spirit, ready to identify with a gentler Lincoln—a Lincoln who could deal comfortably with ambiguity." The little plaza outside the visitor center, said White, will create "a safe space for us to talk about those rifts that divide us."

Forget Stevenson and Cuomo. If Lincoln had been born 125 years later, he could have been Bill Moyers.

After the symposium I went down to the safe space at Tredegar. A long row of protesters had formed along the driveway leading to the iron gates of the parking lot. Cops were everywhere. Several of them, mounted on horseback, had ranged themselves around the hill above the visitor center. Half a dozen others manned a checkpoint at the gate. Everyone entering the park was required to empty bags and purses—pockets, too, in some cases. A printed sign read: "No Coolers, Glass, Signs, Flags or Banners."

I found Leak in the line of protesters along the driveway, dressed festively in a top hat and a cutaway morning coat over his polo shirt and khakis. His signs showed the professional Kinko's touch: "No Honor for War Criminals," and "Jefferson Davis was *Our* President." A friend next to him held another sign: "Your Hero Killed Five of My Ancestors." Behind us, a few of the Sons began singing "Dixie."

"And how was the love-in at the Historical Society?" Leak asked. "Did you learn about the greatness of the great man?"

"They think he was a wimp," I said.

Leak looked away, then back at me. "Jesus," he said. "Even I don't think he was a wimp."

A scuffle broke out at the gate. One of the Sons had tried to enter wearing a T-shirt bearing the Stars and Bars. "No flags," a cop said loudly.

"Just one more example of ethnic cleansing," the man said when he rejoined the other protesters. "They just want to remove the undesirable elements from the population." He saw my notepad and said: "Getting kicked around don't piss me off. We're used to it by now. What pisses me off is when they tell us we're supposed to like it."

I went up to the visitor center. A temporary platform had been set up for a surprisingly large group of speakers: the park supervisor Cynthia MacLeod and Bob Kline, several congressmen, the lieutenant governor, a small army of state legislators. The mayor was at the microphone, commending his city on hosting the "the second coming of Abraham Lincoln." In mid-speech he was drowned out by the sudden appearance of a small propeller plane, circling low overhead. It trailed a big banner: "Sic Semper Tyrannis"—"Thus always to tyrants"—the motto of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the words John Wilkes Booth sang out as he fell to the stage of Ford's Theater, having put a bullet in Lincoln's brain.

I stood off to the side with a group of reporters from

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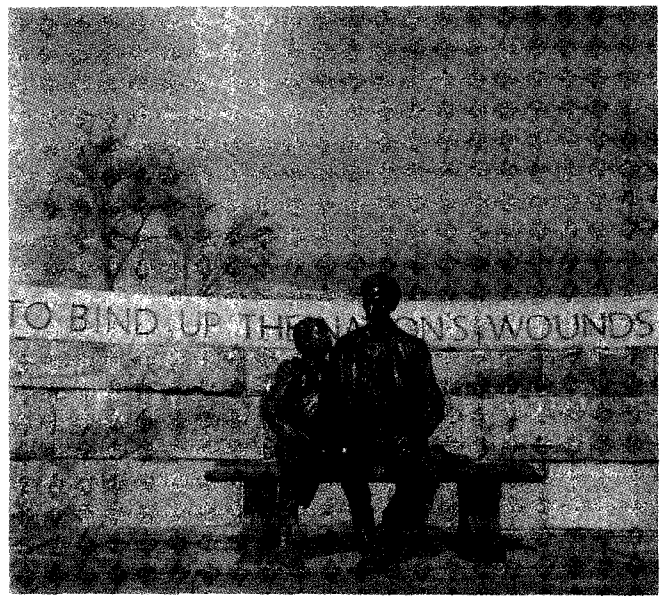
local television stations. Their cameramen milled about, looking bored.

"This is it?" one of them said. "Where's the action?"

I looked around for Brag Bowling, but he was nowhere to be seen. It appeared that no one from the higher ranks of the Sons had bothered to show up. "For two months I'm getting emails—'We're going to stop this thing by any means necessary'; 'Prepare for the fireworks on April 5,'" one of the reporters said. "I guess they lost their nerve." He turned to his cameraman. "At least you got a shot of the prop plane, right?"

When the speeches were over, on toward dusk, the audience gathered around the plaza. The statue sat hunkered under a tarp. With a flourish, Mr. Kline and Cynthia MacLeod yanked the cover off.

"It's so small!" said a lady next to me. And it was—though life-sized, it looked smaller than life, diminutive almost. Lincoln sits tilted forward on a bench with a faraway look in his eyes. Tad is next to him, looking up expectantly, presumably waiting for his father to say something. The effect is supposed to be contemplative, but really it looks as if son has caught dad puzzling through a senior moment. ("Four score and . . . and what? . . . damn! . . . four score and . . . ") The bronze bench on which they sit extends on either side, leaving space for tourists to pose for pictures, and soon the statue was engulfed by the crowd, as everyone jostled to get close.



Lev Nisnevitch

"We wanted Lincoln down here among the people."

I joined Mr. Kline off to one side, where he stood with his partner, Martin Moran, the president of the U.S. Historical Society.

Mr. Kline was much moved. "Right at this moment the meaning of the statue is quite clear, don't you think? It says, very simply, that we should love each other."

He fell silent, and Moran, who is much the more voluble of the two, began extolling the statue's significance.

"I've had historians tell me that this is the most important statue of Lincoln anywhere in the world," he said. "This is a day that will go down in history. People will come from all over to admire this piece."

Tom DiLorenzo, the author of *The Real Lincoln*, had said something oddly similar a few weeks before. Putting the statue in Richmond, he said, reminded him of stories he'd heard about Russia in the 1980s, just before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

"People would walk by all the huge statues of Lenin every day," he said, "and the statues just reminded them of what a lie it all was. Those statues, erected by the Communists, worked against the Communists, because it illustrated the lies the whole system was based on. The same thing'll happen with the statues of Lincoln. In a few years, Americans are going to look at that statue down there, and they're going to wonder, 'What did this man *really* stand for?'"

DiLorenzo is almost certainly wrong, of course, but I'm pretty sure Moran is wrong, too—and they're wrong precisely at the point where they agree: Both have high hopes for the statue, both believe their countrymen will see it as a thing of great consequence, full of meaning, because Lincoln is a figure of such consequence. We watched the visitors elbowing one another, patting Lincoln's shoulders and hair, mugging for snapshots. The sinking sun gilded the statue in outline. I said something about how small the bronze figures looked.

"That was intentional," Moran said. "Could we have got something larger, some huge icon sort of thing? You bet we could have. We could have done one-and-a-half, double, triple life-size. We could have put it on a pedestal.

"And what would we have had then? A giant among the little people. Well, that wouldn't have been appropriate. We wanted Lincoln down here among the people, something more human, more approachable, something everyone could relate to."

As he spoke a mother tried to settle her three kids for a photograph. A little girl hopped into Lincoln's lap and pounded the crown of his head, while her brother knotted his little fingers around the statue's throat, and her sister, letting out a girlish "Eeeewwww," slipped her pinky into the great man's nose.

"And this," Moran said, "this is the Lincoln we've brought back to Richmond." ♦

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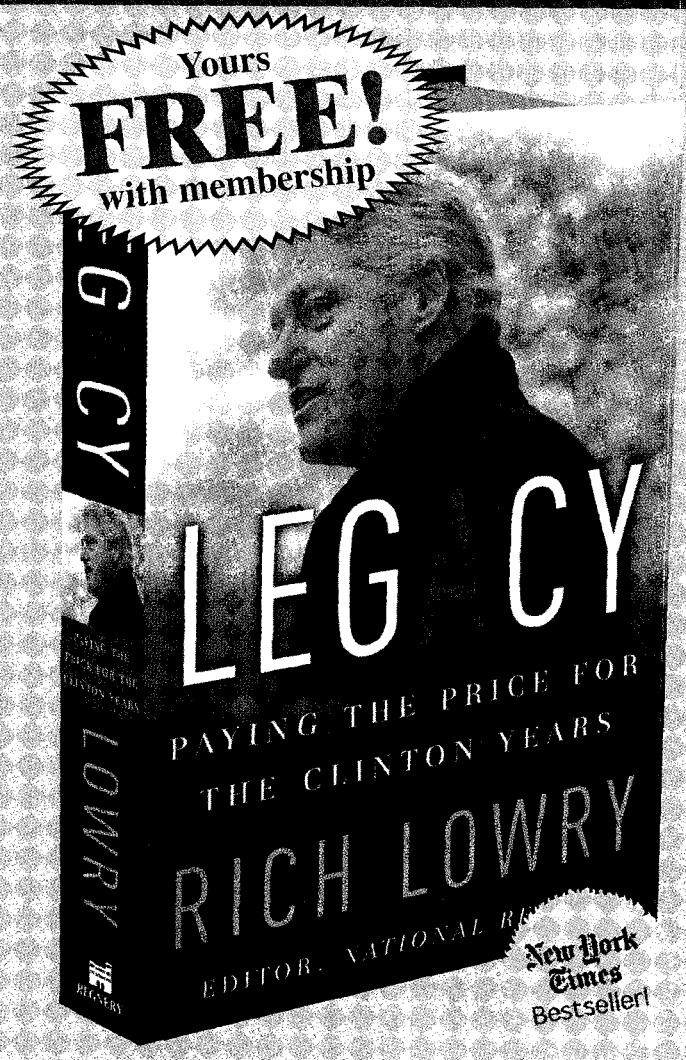
The True Clinton Legacy

A weakened, endangered nation let down by a failed President



Bill and Hillary Clinton don't want you to read this book. Slick Willie has spent virtually every waking moment since he left office defending his legacy and now Hillary plans to run for president on it. But, unfortunately for both Clintons, in ***Legacy, Paying the Price for the Clinton Years*** Rich Lowry exposes the Clinton legacy for what it is — spin, lies and failure.

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Genius Is Not Enough

Charles Murray measures human accomplishment

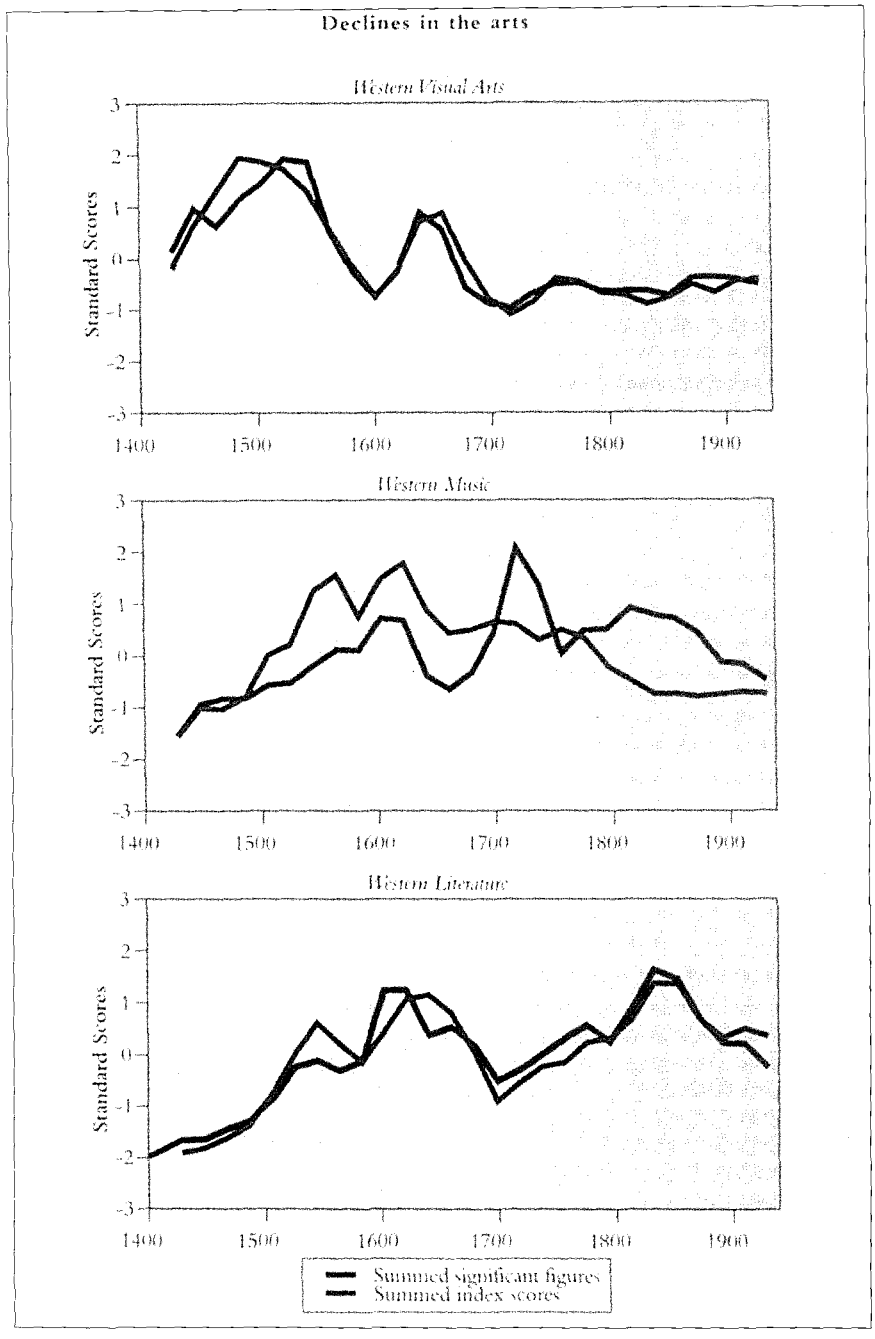
By Jonah Goldberg

"If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants," Isaac Newton wrote Robert Hooke in 1675. Although the aphorism is generally taken as a noble example of Newton's humility and generosity, the truth is that he might not have meant it in a nice way. Hooke was a short man with a twisted spine who believed Newton stole his color theory of light and beseeched his rival in letter after letter to admit it. In short, Newton's "standing on the shoulders of giants" may have been a nasty joke. In fact, Newton wasn't even the first to use the line. Some scholars attribute the original to Bernard of Chartres in 1130, while others trace it even further back.

One moral of this story might be that credit often goes to the wrong person. Another might be that while one may be a metaphorical giant, we are all merely human. And for humans, glory—scientific, artistic, literary, religious, whatever—is a precious commodity, particularly for those who seek it above all else. The giants of history may be standing on the shoulders of other giants, but they'll be damned if they're going to admit it if they don't have to.

One might keep these and related morals in mind when reading Charles Murray's *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences from 800 B.C. to 1950*. More than a book, *Human Accomplishment* is a multipart statement of conclusions to an audacious, even arrogant, attempt to catalogue "humanity's résumé." Murray writes in his introduction: "What, I ask, can homo sapiens brag about—not as individuals, but as a species?" And the metaphor of a résumé allows Murray to ignore much of the fluff that people use to praise themselves. Just as you wouldn't put "good father" or "kind to animals" on your résumé, Murray ignores—for reasons editorial as well as technical—issues beyond the scope of a conventional résumé including commerce and governance. "Defeated Hitler" may be a great accomplishment, but it's too much like "beat my drug habit" for a résumé of homo sapiens.

Murray catalogs 4,002 significant individuals over the course of 2,750 years who comprise humanity's all-star team, itself broken down into subcategories of chemistry, biology, astronomy, etc. He came up with the list by taking 167 respected encyclopedias, biographi-



A graph from Charles Murray's *Human Accomplishment*. HarperCollins.

Human Accomplishment
The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences from 800 B.C. to 1950
by Charles Murray
HarperCollins, 668 pp., $29.95

Jonah Goldberg is editor at large of National Review Online.

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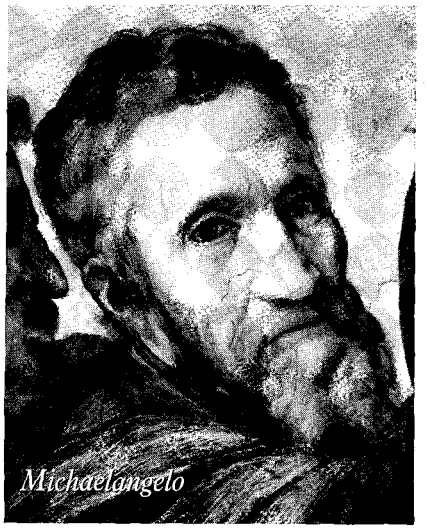

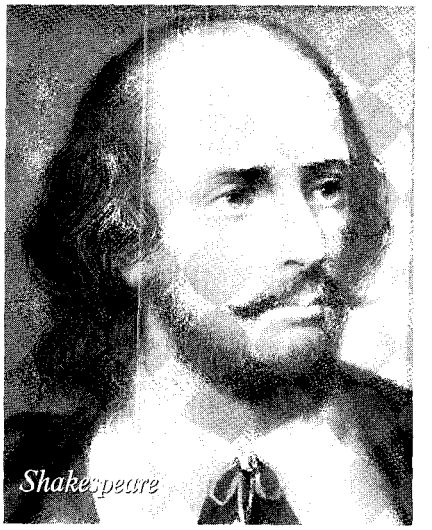

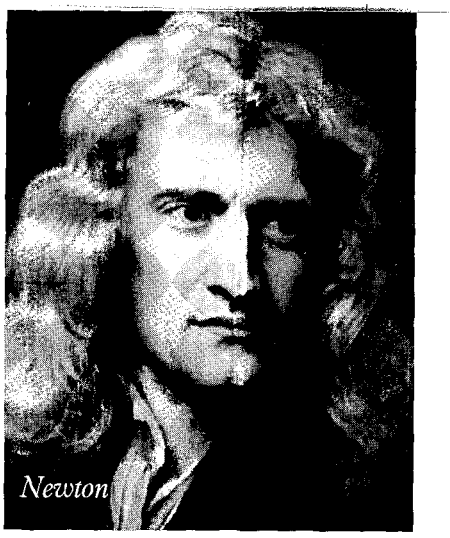

All three pictures: Bettmann / CORBIS.

cal dictionaries, and other reference works, tallying up the size, frequency, and content of the entries on specific individuals and their accomplishments—and then crunching the numbers with the sort of élan and sophistication we've come to expect from the author of *Losing Ground* and coauthor of *The Bell Curve.*

Murray insists, and goes to painstaking efforts to demonstrate, that he's compensated for the various obvious biases—national, racial, even temporal—that would come from relying on mostly recent sources, many of which are Western and many of the remainder of which may reflect certain Western prejudices such as logocentrism. In fact, Murray often overcompensates in favor of non-Western individuals as a means of demonstrating that his general conclusion holds true.

And what's that general conclusion? Well, in a nutshell: Western Civilization is the best. No matter how you slice it, no matter how heavily you mash your thumb down on the scale in favor of "the rest," the West—specifically Western Europe over a few centuries—is the best. The obvious corollary to this general rule is that dead, Christian white men are the biggest glory hounds (with dead, Jewish white men a respectable, although recent, second). Of course, if you include as criteria such results-skewing categories as "artists who've painted Vishnu" or "the greatest lesbian-animist biologists" you will get results more appealing to the chairman of your local Post-Colonial Studies department. But if the qualifications are universal, fair, and in the slightest bit reasonable, there's no way to tease the data enough even to trim significantly the lead of the dead white men.

Murray attributes this to something called the Lotka Curve, named after a Hungarian-born American demographer who noticed that most contributors to scientific journals write only one article while a tiny few—the giants—write dozens. When drawn in graph form, this distribution of excellence apparently holds relatively constant for all fields of human endeavor. Consider golf. More than half of all professional golfers have never won a tournament, and of those who have won a tournament, a majority have won only one. But Jack Nicklaus won eighteen major professional tournaments. As Murray notes, you can come up with as many postmodern theories about the "social construction of reality" as you like: It won't change the fact that Jack Nicklaus was a much better golfer than most great golfers. This pattern tends to hold true for science, art, literature, philosophy and every other realm of the human pursuit of excellence. Shakespeare (Murray's top Western writer) racked up a staggering number of accomplishments while the vast majority of even "successful" writers have one good work in them.

Controversial as Murray's conclusions may seem in a world of political correctness, the means by which he arrives at them are even more controversial. Murray believes that a great many things are measurable in ways that may irk even his fans. Murray claims to make two assertions of fact. The first is that his numbers reflect the definitive consensus among those who know what they're talking about. The second claim is that this consensus of opinion reflects objective fact. The first claim is probably indisputable. The second claim is obviously more contentious, but I suspect that only a tiny number of individuals at the high end of the Lotka Curve of statisticians could come up with serious objections to Murray's methods.

One of the great understatements of all time is that this reviewer is not one of them. Nevertheless, I will say that I am fairly suspicious of all these numbers, and I suspect that Murray does a bit too much looking for car keys where the light is good in *Human Accomplishment.* It may be the consensus of a divergent group of experts that Michelangelo was the greatest Western artist, but if one were to apply Murray's techniques to the social sciences—which he convincingly argues is impossible right now—one would surely find Karl Marx ranking very high indeed. In other words, just because the experts agree doesn't always mean they are right.

Nevertheless, any objections I could raise have been anticipated by Murray—whose intellectual honesty and general excitement with the subject matter is beyond admirable. Indeed, Murray repeatedly asks readers to prove him wrong. But ultimately, I don't care whether Murray is exactly right or merely very close to right. One of the fundamental assumptions of this book is that "excellence" in art, in science, in philosophy exists and therefore can be measured. If Murray were writing about economic growth, few would dispute the contention that economic growth exists even if economists have yet to master a means of measuring it with exactitude. In other words, one may dis-

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agree with Murray about how *precise* such measurements can be, but Murray is irrefutable when he makes the case—contra the postmodernists—that it can actually be measured at all.

To put it another way, the late William Henry III wrote in *In Defense of Elitism* that "It is scarcely the same thing to put a man on the moon as to put a bone in your nose." Now, all reasonable people should agree that this statement is true, even if reasonable people may disagree on the question of *how much greater* an accomplishment it is to put a man on the moon than it is to put a bone through your nose. Murray attempts to put numbers on the bone-to-moon ratio. Romantic that I am, I have trouble buying that this is all so cut and dried. I have no idea who these people are, but I bet there's more room to argue that Dong Qichang (number three on Murray's Chinese-painter list) was actually a better painter than Gu Kaizhi (number one), than the author allows. And, I still hold out hope that one day poor Robert "Shorty" Hooke will stand a little taller than Newton allowed.

Regardless, thanks to Murray's labors, it's very hard to imagine an intellectually honest way of coming up with a final list of giants that differs significantly from the one Murray has come up with (try, for example, to come up with an honest system for delineating great golfers that leaves off Jack Nicklaus). And even to try would, of necessity, concede the fundamental thesis of the first part of this book: that measurable excellence does exist—since to declare that Murray measures excellence "wrong" is to admit that it can be measured right.

The trick is to look at Murray's daunting decimal points pointilistically. Take a step back and what one really sees is a broad, sophisticated model about the essential trends of human history. When Samuel Huntington was accused of generalizing too much in his *Clash of Civilizations* thesis, he responded, "When people think seriously, they think abstractly; they conjure up simplified pictures of reality called concepts, theories, models, paradigms. Without such intellectual constructs, there is, William James said, only 'a bloomin' buzzin' confusion.'"

Murray's mission is to cut through the confusion about how humanity was pulled from the muck by a tiny handful of individuals. After demonstrating that European men did the vast majority of heavy-lifting, he asks, "Why?" Why men? Why Europe? Why not China? Why did Jews explode on the scene about two centuries ago, but not women? The audacity of Murray's effort is that he sees all of the questions as answerable, and he joyfully and

Charles Murray

AEI

enthusiastically tackles them one by one. Along the way, he launches little fireworks of surprises in the forms of asides, anticipating questions about everything from homosexuality to the nature of excellence itself.

His broad conclusion is that Western Christian culture comes out on top of the scale because it essentially sees scientific and artistic creativity as a revelation of God's glory rather than an insult to it. Of course, that isn't constantly true across the whole of Christendom—else we would not see history's pattern of pockets of excellence sprouting only in particular cities at particular moments. Moreover, the individual giants of human history weren't necessarily pious or honorable men themselves (although a great many were). Nonetheless, because they lived in specific milieus where individual excellence was allowed to flower, they were able to achieve great things. Murray surmises that we produce fewer giants today in part because the West is becoming increasingly hostile to the notion that we should pursue excellence as if we were striving to please the eye of God.

As one might suspect, *Human Excellence* is not a normal book. Any review must leave out far more than it includes. Murray has thought long and hard on questions most of us would consider exciting grist for a conversation with a group of polymaths but too difficult to extend any further than the available supply of scotch and the imponderability of the issues involved allow. For example, Murray makes the obvious observation—in retrospect—that art is in fact more difficult than science because, while scientific experimentation often involves blind luck or rote repetition (stumble on the right ingredients, and Eureka!), art requires sustained creativity and judgment from beginning to end. No coasting allowed.

Still, if I may make one observation that will probably not be made anywhere else: This is an astoundingly neoconservative book. Back in the days before the left transmuted the word "neoconservative" to mean war-mongering Jew, a prevailing understanding of the term was that it referred to a certain group of intellectuals who imported the sociological method to conservatism. What made, say, the *Public Interest* a neoconservative magazine was that it attacked issues of public policy with social science—then the lingua franca of the serious left—in order to reach conservative conclusions. Hence, one of the main criticisms of neoconservatism from the right was that it did not work enough from first principles. It had to prove everything that earlier generations thought self-evident. Neocons were too concerned with immanentizing and not concerned enough with the eschaton, to mangle a phrase from Eric Voegelin. Indeed, even the benefits of religion could not be taken on faith. The neocons had to prove that believing in God tended to keep societies more orderly, families more intact, and children more successful.

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Well, here we have *Human Accomplishment*, a book written by an avowed libertarian that, quite literally, puts all of humanity through the algorithmic wringer. What comes out the other end? Unsurprisingly, the rediscovery of what conservatives had said all along: The combination of the West's indebtedness to Athens, Jerusalem, and Rome set the foundations for an exceptional civilization that, in turn, created the Enlightenment and, eventually, the United States of America. The postmodernists and critical theorists, who shriek that the edifice created by these many giants should be dismantled, are taking sledgehammers to the very platforms from which they shriek.

Murray picks a truly novel and brilliant way to restate the conservative case. *Human Accomplishment* is a glistening example of excellence, and we should all be grateful to stand on Murray's shoulders. ♦

Daschled Hopes

The South Dakota senator looks back on his brief stint as majority leader. **BY JON LAUCK**

In South Dakota, Tom Daschle is known for wooing the opposition. And, the truth is, he has to woo—since South Dakota Republicans have a ten-point registration advantage over Democrats. In 1992, he even called to woo me, a lowly college junior at the time, and we visited for over forty minutes. The subject was a column I had written for the college newspaper asking why he voted with northeastern liberals such as George Mitchell. It was the early stages of Daschle's rise to power under Mitchell's tutelage, and he was clearly nervous about the friction between serving under Mitchell and representing a very non-Mitchell sort of state.

Like No Other Time
The 107th Congress and the Two Years That Changed America Forever
by Tom Daschle
Crown, 304 pp., $25

In his new memoir, *Like No Other Time*, Daschle concedes that the "majority of South Dakotans are conservatives." But the contradictions between Daschle's leadership obligations and his state's conservative leanings have so far not hobbled his Senate campaigns. Since he began his ascent under Mitchell, Daschle's opponents have been unknown and unfunded. The 2004 race could be an ordeal, however, as Daschle's ability to woo his way around the contradictions may finally collapse.

Daschle's book reviews various political moments of the last three years: the 2000 election, the evenly divided Senate, Senator Jeffords's abandonment of the Republicans, Daschle's reign as Senate majority leader, the attacks of September 11, and the 2002 midterm elections. The book is Daschle's gloss on events, of course, and it's basically campaign literature. Its chronology could have included the Senate impeachment trial of 1999, for example, but that would be politically foolish (saving Clinton's bacon was not high on the list of priorities for South Dakota voters). Instead, Daschle begins with a partisan jab: The 2000 presidential election was "ended not by voters, but by judges," as Gore was "cheated in Florida."

With an eye to his 2004 Senate bid in a state where 60 percent of voters supported President Bush in 2000 (and haven't voted for a Democratic presidential candidate in forty years), Daschle wants to be seen as something of a friend of Bush. He presses the absurd argument that he does not obstruct the president's agenda—indeed, the "entire concept of 'obstructionism' simply makes no sense." For Daschle, such criticism is an attempt to "silence the voices of opposition in a democratic society" and to "invite something in the way of autocracy." It was Republican senators who "turned the filibuster into an art form in the 1990s" and unfairly used it after the Jeffords switch.

He particularly blames Bush for the tone of Washington politics. Daschle says *he* wanted more Eisenhower-esque "leadership breakfasts" with the president to foster bipartisanship. While bemoaning the "polarization and partisanship" in Washington, Daschle labels a Bush judicial nominee an "apologist for racist cross burners." He also notes how President Bush and his advisers were "cutting their losses on politically popular issues." Daschle knows of what he speaks, having recently voted for a ban on lawsuits against the gun industry and a ban on partial-birth abortions.

The assumption that voters won't notice such hypocrisy is a sign that Daschle believes contradictions can be papered over with political maneuvering and spin. Contrasting Daschle to George McGovern underscores how much American liberalism has shriveled in a half-century. McGovern succeeded in South Dakota politics after World War II as an articulate war hero/professor, a political risk-taker with a grand vision. McGovern left his safe academic post to organize the state's Democratic party—at a time when Republicans outnumbered Democrats in the state legislature 108 to 2. When he became a senator, he drew upon the intellectual traditions of Progressivism and the Social Gospel to shape his views. Daschle, on the other hand, hires Clinton operatives to conduct focus groups and take polls. McGovern's soft-spoken approach was moving, his voice that of a Methodist minister's son and a deliberative scholar, one who respected the importance

Jon Lauck is an assistant professor of history at South Dakota State University.

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of rationality in democratic discourse. Daschle tries to imitate the McGovern style, but he just sounds mousy.

The trajectory of their careers is also instructive. McGovern began as part of the grand Rooseveltian coalition that sought to complete the unfinished work of the New Deal, an unapologetic advocate of using government to reconstruct whole sectors of American life, and he was willing to alienate the party establishment and rebel against Johnson's prosecution of the Vietnam War. He built a mass movement of outsiders (by literally rewriting the rules) and captured the Democratic presidential nomination. Daschle, on the other hand, niggles with details. He's concerned with whether the nation should "retroactively repeal the alternative minimum tax for large corporations." In his book he describes his monumental decision as majority leader to change the name of the "Democratic Steering Committee" to the "Democratic Steering and Coordination Committee."

In contrast to the myriad of programs and policies cranked out during the New Deal and Great Society, a reader searches in vain for one original idea in Daschle. Instead of advancing a broad vision, Daschle does errands for the Democratic party's interest groups: Tort reforms are killed for the trial lawyers, judicial appointees are filibustered for the pro-choice lobby, school choice is undermined for teachers' unions, and major bills on aviation and homeland security are delayed for public-employee unions. Daschle's position on Iraq, for another example, is embarrassing when contrasted with McGovern's on Vietnam.

Although carefully scripted, some revealing comments in Daschle's book slip by the screeners, probably because they are such fixed constellations in the Democratic universe that nobody noticed. Daschle, for example, was critical of President Bush's "axis of evil" speech in the wake of the terrorist attacks because he is "uncomfortable" with use of the term "evil" and the "language of religious conflict." When the president said in his speech after the attacks of September 11 that "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists," Daschle found it "worrisome." Daschle offers no indication he understands the nature or depth of the Islamo-fascist threat to the nation. He sees the "war on terrorism" in terms of political "strategy." The most he says, without any explication or deeper imagination or sense of moral horror, is that the rule of the Taliban was "harsh."

Although Daschle relentlessly prepares for an opponent from the right in 2004, his biggest problem may be a leadership challenge from the left. After being rolled on the Bush tax cuts, Bush's major education reform bill, the war in Iraq, and now prescription drugs, his caucus must be seething. The anger among rank-and-file Democratic voters is already palpable in the ascendancy of Howard Dean.

Preventing his caucus from erupting, obstructing the president's agenda in an election year without it looking like obstruction, and wooing swing-vote Republicans in South Dakota is a long pull for Daschle. His greatest wooing tool, his clout, was blunted when he failed to line up the necessary votes to pass an energy bill with its ethanol provisions (he was out signing copies of his book). His hard times argument may also evaporate. Although Daschle views the Bush economy as "failing," "floundering," and "plunging," his argument will seem silly if the current economic growth rate continues. And Daschle's campaign may be bogged down by his obligation to brag about the importance of a future President Dean.

But if he wants to start wooing, he can call me.

Again. ♦

Same Old Song and Dance

How the Nutcracker *conquered America.*

BY JUDITH GELERNTER

You see him around a lot this time of year, the nutcracker soldier in a brightly colored, antiquated uniform. Amateur and professional performances of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* are a holiday commonplace around the nation, and if you miss your local production, you can still catch PBS's December 24 airing of George Balanchine's choreography for the New York City Ballet. The *Nutcracker* has become a Christmas tradition in the United States—performed more often than any piece of classical music except Handel's *Messiah* and by far the most popular ballet in North America.

Nutcracker Nation
How an Old World Ballet Became a Christmas Tradition in the New World
by Jennifer Fisher
Yale University Press, 256 pp., $27

The ballet was born in 1892 in St. Petersburg, when choreographer Marius Petipa, with his assistant Lev Ivanov, decided to stage one of E.T.A. Hoffmann's peculiar, proto-Kafkaesque fairy tales, an 1816 story called "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King." Tchaikovsky was asked to compose the score in increments, bar by bar, to accommodate Petipa's structure for the dancing—which is perhaps why early reviews criticized the imbalance of the structure: all story and little dance in the first act, and all dance and little story in the second. Some regard-

Judith Gelernter is a writer in New York.

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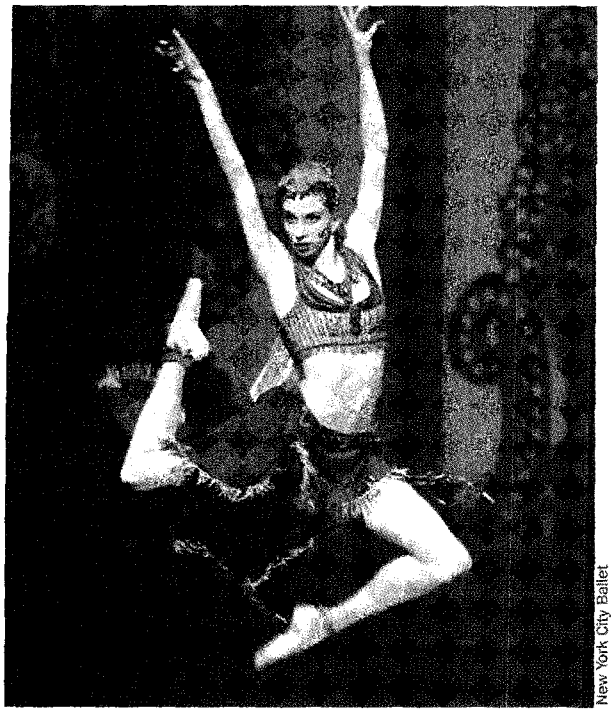

New York City Ballet

Dana Hanson dances the Coffee variation.

ed it more as spectacle than ballet, with a plot that lacked soul, and choreography that lacked the flashy solos its audience had come to expect.

What's curious is that the *Nutcracker* was acclaimed in the New World for the same qualities for which it was faulted in the Old: its levity, its emphasis on spectacle, its child dancers, and, especially, its appeal to young audiences. Within a few decades, dancers such as Anna Pavlova were slipping excerpts into their programs while touring. Walt Disney set portions to cartoon flowers, fish, and mushrooms in his 1940 animation *Fantasia*, and in 1944 the ballet was mounted in full for the first time in this country by the San Francisco Ballet. In 1954, Balanchine drew upon his childhood memory of the ballet and adopted elements of the original to make his own version for the New York City Ballet, which has been performed every year since.

Where the *Nutcracker* once graced programs of any season, it is now a December exclusive. Yet its theme is not religious. Trees and gifts during winter are associated in Russia with the New Year. The details vary from production to production, but in a nutshell: A tree decorates the stage. A young girl is presented by her uncle with a nutcracker, but her brother covets it, they tussle, and it breaks. Then the family and their guests dance at a house party. The uncle slips in after the guests leave and repairs the nutcracker such that the magic can begin.

At midnight, the tree grows visibly, altering the scale and helping us to imagine the nutcracker's transition from inanimate toy to soldier boy. The nutcracker soldier fights and begins to lose to an aggressive Mouse King. The girl comes to the soldier's aid, whereupon he becomes a prince and whisks her to his Land of Sweets for the second act. The inhabitants and their reigning Sugar Plum Fairy welcome the girl and her prince with a series of dances from other lands. The series climaxes with a *grand pas de deux* between the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier.

In her new study, *Nutcracker Nation*, Jennifer Fisher seeks an explanation for America's love of this Victorian story ballet. Based on interviews with performers, stagers, and audiences, as well as consideration of allusions in literature and on screen, she pronounces the *Nutcracker* high art, accessible enough to become "the people's ballet." Another factor is a plot sufficiently flexible to allow choreographers and communities to "tell a story about themselves" within its recognizable structure. "Hulas were added in Hawaii, cowboys in Arizona, hockey players in Winnipeg, Cajun food in Louisiana."

The sponsoring community or special effects distinguish one performance from another and continue to draw audiences. Take, for example, Balanchine's *Nutcracker* for the New York City Ballet. Even in New York, a dance capital where ballet is highly appreciated, it was the special effect of the Christmas tree rising out of the stage floor from twelve to forty feet that elicited the most mid-performance applause at one of this year's matinees. The young Angels were dressed with stiff, flared, floor-length dresses that hid their feet and made them appear like figurines skimming across the stage. Near the end of her solo, the Arabian dancer of the Coffee variation lay midriff to floor and held one leg up jauntily behind while looking into the audience. The Candy Cane corps danced with their hoops while the principal jumped through his. But it was the Cavalier and Sugar Plum Fairy, when she held an arabesque and he drew her on *pointe* across the floor or lifted her high above his head, that created the most special of effects.

Fisher celebrates how the *Nutcracker* varies from one region of America to another—which makes it a shame that she imposes some bizarre modern debates upon the different ways the ballet has been presented over the years. How can mushrooms that seem to dance to the Tea variation in Disney's *Fantasia* be considered a "racist portrayal"? Why ask who holds power in a *pas de deux*, man or woman? This seems the equivalent of asking which string instrument dominates a quartet. And why subject to feminist critique an art codified over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries?

Still, rather than present a biography of a dancer or company fascinating to only a few, or co-opt some theory as a core and illustrate it with dance examples, Fisher's method of using interviews results in a book that may appeal not just to dancers or theorists, but to the public at large.

One of the main determinants of the popularity of the *Nutcracker* in North America seems to be its alliance with Christmas. Like turkey on Thanksgiving or fireworks on Independence Day, *Nutcrackers* for the Christmas season have become what Fisher calls an "invented tradition" or ritual. Any ritual becomes part of the collective memory of the group that observes it; it breaks away from its creators and the time and place of its inception, to claim its own past and a future that is almost assured. This could happen again. Why not ally Coralli and Perrot's haunting ballet *Giselle* with Halloween or Twyla Tharp's *Westerly Round* with Independence Day?

In the meantime, you're doing your part to support ballet when, yet again, you take the children to see the *Nutcracker* this year. ♦

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"No, I'm afraid the Tibetan Book of the Dead has been checked out."

School for Scandal

This fall, twelve colleges featured a program called "The Arts of Democracy"—with funds from the federal Department of Education.

It's an interesting curriculum the nation's tax dollars have bought. At Albany SUNY, for example, students in "The Arts of Democracy" focus on the African diaspora. Pacific Lutheran teaches democracy with classes in theater, women's studies, and environmental studies. At John Carroll University, instruction comes through courses on globalization and cultural diversity. Going beyond the classroom, Beloit College features "action-oriented activities" in women's studies, while at the University of Delaware, freshmen in common dorms enroll in such course clusters as "Caribbean Steel Drums" or "Globalization and Gender." Heritage College has courses that stress "cross-cultural community" and "global awareness."

Meanwhile, the Rochester Institute of Technology announced that the money will allow the school to hire a "cadre of new, multidisciplinary faculty" to develop courses skeptical of "globalization." The program already contains several offerings organized around the "Western veil of ignorance" and the "apartheid" of globalization. Students are graded in part through journal entries "about involvement in social-advocacy groups."

Then there's my own Brooklyn College, where "The Arts of Democracy" has no courses related to democracy or international relations in political science, history, economics, or philosophy. Students learn, instead, that democracy entails support for a "community of diversity," with courses on such topics as literature and cultural diversity and global cinema.

The school's administration admires this approach so much that it wants to expand the program into a major called "Global Studies." Indeed, declaring "The Arts of Democracy" the model for making "an understanding of global perspectives an integral part of the general education curriculum," Brooklyn College hopes to use it to replace the college's nationally respected core curriculum.

The provost, Roberta Matthews, termed the idea that colleges should focus on transmitting knowledge "a very outdated notion." That, perhaps, explains why the instructors in Brooklyn's "Arts of Democracy" include the dean of student life—who notes that before the attacks of September 11, few understood the nation could be targeted by "those referred to as 'terrorists' or by other American citizens." The new curriculum will help students answer such questions as, "Was September 11 contrived?" and "What did the United States government know and when did it know it?" and "Whose rights would be violated now?"

Underlying the "Arts of Democracy" project is a fascinating attempt to redefine college education. The group coordinating the program—the Association of American Colleges and Universities—holds that middle- and working-class students enter college deeply sexist and racist. Such students need "education for the 21st century" to abandon their hostility to "diversity." The association's project director describes "The Arts of Democracy" as "one small way of beginning to work toward another kind of global community rather than the fractured, violence-ridden one represented by the kind of heinous acts committed on September 11th." The program will create "knowledgeable, empathetic members of society" who would "help ensure enlightened policy decisions."

The association seems unable to understand that different people may, in good faith, define "enlightened policy decisions" in different ways. Nor has the organization explained why or how a college curriculum should promote specific policy decisions—even those related to the "heinous acts committed on September 11th."

By underwriting the "Arts of Democracy" project, the federal government has used Americans' tax dollars for a program that views the entire modern democratic project as a sustained effort to suppress and marginalize in the interests of power, privilege, and profit—in fact, for a program that not only fails to inform students about their civic foundations but undermines respect for the American achievement.

—Robert David Johnson

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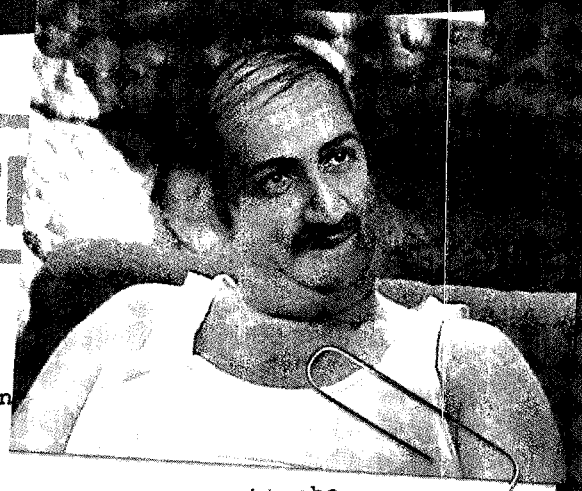
Parody

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was in the Fox News studio's green room December 16, waiting to appear on an evening program when she said, "Do you suppose that the Bush administration has Osama bin Laden hidden away somewhere and will bring him out before the election?" **—News item**



FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

TOP SECRE

[CONFIDENTIAL]

[decrypted satellite transmission]

To: D.R. at DoD
From: ****** *****, Task Force 2020,
Special Ops [somewhere in Wazzupistan

Re: OPERATION TROGLODYTE

After hearing about Albright's question, we thought she might be onto us. We were all relieved to hear her say it was "tongue in cheek." Maybe the joke would be funnier if the guys and I hadn't been living with OBL 24/7 for almost two years now.

The scariest part was the suggestion that we could be here until an "October surprise." The Task Force guys ask me every day when the White House will announce that we've "found" OBL. They're getting a little impatient. So I thought I'd raise again the two key issues: (1) how to convince the Arab world it's really him, and (2) how to time the "capture episode."

With every passing week, it will get harder to convince the Arab street that we've got the genuine OBL. For starters, the beard is gone -- He shaves every day with a Remington Microscreen. His hair is a grimy comb-over, he wears nothing but saggy jeans and wifebeaters, and he's put on about 120 pounds since we brought him here. [See attached photo.] He sits around all day sucking down our six-packs of O'Doul's, eating MRE chocolate bars, and griping that our satellite Internet connection can't handle the mpeg "previews" of his 72 virgins.

Anyway, we'd like to suggest some tentative "capture" dates. We could "nab" him about 36 hours before any of the following:

a. Dec. 25, 2003 ("Merry Christmas")
b. Jan. 27, 2004 (New Hampshire primary)
c. March 2, 2004 (Super Tuesday)
d. August 30, 2004 (Republican Convention)

Not that it will matter to you, but the winner of the Task Force preference poll was "a."

As for logistics, we suggest that POTUS fly over here secretly, rappel from an MH-53J Pave Low III chopper, and then drag OBL out of a cave by his ear. We'll get the whole thing on video. If we do it right, no one will have to worry about dangling chads in 2004.

Tell Karl I said hello.

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Differences in American and European Worldviews

Russell A. Berman is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Walter A. Haas Professor in the Humanities at Stanford University.

Rather than viewing European Anti-Americanism solely in terms of current policy disputes, we must look at our deep-seated cultural differences. According to *Views of a Changing World,* a study conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, **Americans and West Europeans advocate very distinct philosophical stances, especially regarding matters of individual responsibility and the role of the state.**

Asked to evaluate the statement "Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control," 32 percent of the Americans polled agreed, in contrast to 48 percent in England, 54 percent in France, 66 percent in Italy, and 68 percent in Germany. Less than a third of Americans view their lives as defined by external forces, implying that the majority see the world in terms of individual responsibility. Meanwhile, Europeans minimize individual responsibility and attribute much greater importance to outside forces. Whereas Europeans tend toward a deterministic worldview, Americans focus on individual freedom.

The survey also measured how public opinion chooses between two competing values: the value of the freedom of individuals to pursue goals without state interference and the value of a state guarantee that no one be in need. Fifty-eight percent of Americans, a significant majority, chose freedom from state interference as the most important goal. This result stands in stark contrast to Europe, where freedom earns support at dramatically lower rates: only 39 percent in Germany, 36 percent in France, 33 percent in England, and a paltry 24 percent in Italy. Whereas Americans are predisposed to understand their lives in terms of individual responsibility and reject greater state regulation, Europeans, on the other hand, take the opposite position: They view their lives in terms of larger social forces and expect the state to protect them from need—even at the price of a restriction of their freedom. No wonder current domestic politics in most European countries involves the difficult task of reforming firmly entrenched welfare-state systems.

Not surprisingly, **the cultural difference between Americans and Europeans has significant foreign policy ramifications**. The American worldview of individual responsibility underpins an insistence on national sovereignty. In contrast, Europeans—especially the French and the Germans—tend to support restraints on the power of individual states. The lesson they take away from the two world wars is that curbs should be placed on individual states to prevent them from pursuing selfish interests. As a result, European states are gradually ceding elements of their sovereignty to the superstate of the European Union. In contrast, the United States has repeatedly demonstrated its reluctance to cede such authority to international bodies.

This is the cultural basis for the debate over multilateralism and unilateralism. In practice, the difference is, of course, hardly absolute. Although European politicians insist on international cooperation, they typically continue to pursue national interests. Whereas the American leadership insists on the right to act independently, it has appealed repeatedly to the United Nations for support. Nonetheless, the significant differences in American and European worldviews are likely to cause political rifts long after the current battles, such as Iraq and Kyoto, have faded.

—Russell A. Berman

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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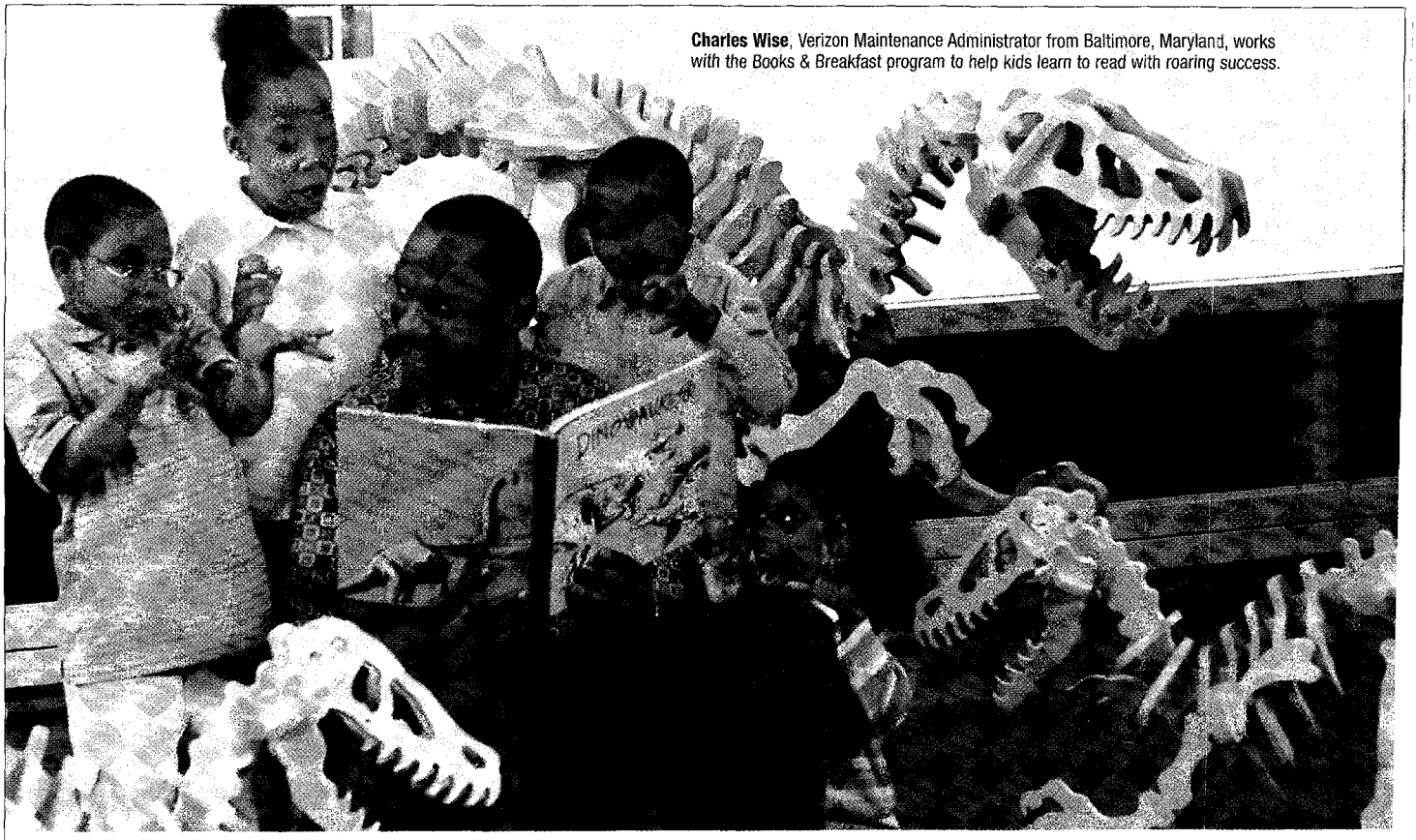

Charles Wise, Verizon Maintenance Administrator from Baltimore, Maryland, works with the Books & Breakfast program to help kids learn to read with roaring success.

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Last year, Verizon employees volunteered in 18,300 different ways. Throughout the country we helped people make progress in areas ranging from literacy to acquiring job skills and bringing technology into their community. If you or someone you know would like to join us, please contact us at verizon.com/foundation for more information. Thanks.

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